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THE LIVES  
OF  
THE FATHERS, MARTYRS  
AND OTHER PRINCIPAL  
SAINTS



SAINT GENOVEFA

FIGURE 100

Many miracles are attributed to the intervention of this saint of the fifth century. By her courage and daring she saved Paris from starvation, and she is that city's chief patroness. In art she is often shown holding a candle because of the story that when she went to pray at night the devil blew out her candle to frighten her.

THE LIVES  
OF  
THE FATHERS, MARTYRS  
AND OTHER PRINCIPAL  
SAINTS

BY THE REV. ALBAN BUTLER

EDITED FOR DAILY USE BY

THE REV. BERNARD KELLY, F.R. HIST. SOC.

VOLUME I



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## FOREWORD

THE abridgment of any classic work often seems to many persons a sort of profanation! Yet the abridgment is itself a splendid tribute to the excellence and utility of the original! Few people in this hurried and harrassed age have the time to wade through bulky tomes however valuable, and it is to provide the busy man and woman with what is best in the production that abbreviated editions of famous books are issued. Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, which first appeared in 1745, is a very good example of the work that will serve a larger purpose in a less extensive form. Side by side with what may be called the outstanding Saints, are many notices of holy persons whose lives and deeds have not caught the imagination of the majority of readers. This, of course, is no disparagement to the canonized individuals in question. They are sufficiently well known and publicly honoured chiefly in their own localities, but for some reason, not always to be easily explained, they have not come conspicuously before the eye of the Catholic world. Moreover, many of their salient achievements and virtues are abundantly represented in their more famous brethren, some of whose histories and glorious examples are recorded in this book.

The object of the compiler has been to provide an edition of the work so arranged as to enable the general reader to study the life of one conspicuous Saint every day, the lesser known names being referred to in footnotes. History, as Napoleon used to say, is the only true philosophy, since it teaches by that most forcible of methods—example. The lives of the Saints in the same way may be called, not indeed the only true method of spiritual reading, but certainly a very impressive one, for by it we do not merely speculate upon the various phases of more or less abstract virtues, but see these virtues actually displayed in practice before our eyes. Coming as they did from every rank and condition of life, the Saints are indeed a mighty cloud of witnesses raised up for our encouragement in the battle of life and of eternity, and each can find his or her hero or heroine

whereon to model personal conduct and ideals. If the soldier is braced by the holy fortitude of St George, St Sebastian, and St Martin—the lawyer encouraged to higher things by the firmness and self-sacrificing motives of St Thomas More and St Yvo, “the Advocate of the Poor”—the servant-maid is no less stimulated to perform the humble drudgery of domestic life for the glory of God by the fidelity and perseverance of St Zita.

The diligent perusal of the lives of the Saints was a favourite spiritual exercise with many of our Catholic forefathers during the penal days, and the popularity of Butler’s great work—as shown by its successive editions—proves that in these happier times the interest and force of his pages are no less consoling and instructive. With every confidence, therefore, is this impression of his famous book now put forward, and doubtless it will do much to make an already very famous literary monument still better known. Many, no doubt, from its pages will learn, perhaps for the first time, those often hidden principles of the Science of the Saints which once grasped and generously acted upon, have in all ages raised up that vast army which no man can number (Apoc. vii. 9), now standing in its white robed array before the eternal throne of God.

There is, perhaps, no better proof of the permanent value of Butler’s classical “Lives” than the fact that several large reprints of the same have appeared in recent years. Notwithstanding the almost unparalleled upheaval caused by two World Wars, the wonderful edification and erudition of the long-famous work continue to console and instruct a multitude of interested and grateful readers.

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# THE LIVES OF THE FATHERS, MARTYRS, AND OTHER PRINCIPAL SAINTS

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JANUARY 1

LIFE OF SAINT FULGENTIUS, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

(A.D. 533)

[Extracted from his works; and from his life, accurately written by a disciple of great abilities, the companion of his exile: and dedicated to Felician, his successor in the see of Ruspa. The author declares himself a monk: consequently was not the deacon Ferrandus, as some critics imagine.]

FABIUS CLAUDIUS GORDIANUS FULGENTIUS was the descendant of a noble senatorian family of Carthage: but much decayed in its splendour by the invasion of the Vandals. His father Claudius, being unjustly deprived of his house in Carthage, which was made over to the Arian priests, settled at an estate belonging to him at Telepte, the capital city of the province of Byzacena. Our saint was born in 468, about thirty years after the Barbarians had dismembered Africa from the Roman empire. He was educated in sentiments of piety with his younger brother, under the care of his mother Mariana, who was left a young widow. Being, by her particular direction, taught the Greek very young, he spoke it with as proper and exact an accent as if it had been his native language. He also applied himself to Latin, and all the useful parts of human literature, under masters distinguished for consummate abilities, yet he knew how to mingle business with study; for he took upon himself the regulation of the family concerns, in order to ease his mother of the burden. His prudent circumspection in all the affairs he transacted, his virtuous conduct, his mild carriage to all, and more especially his deference for his mother, without whose express orders or approbation he never did anything, caused him to be beloved and admired wherever his name was known. He was chosen procurator, that is, lieutenant-governor, and general receiver of the taxes of Byzacena. But it was not long before he grew disgusted with the world; and being justly alarmed at its dangers, he armed himself against them by pious readings, assiduous prayer, and rigorous fasting. His visits to monasteries were frequent; and happening, among other books of spiritual entertainment, to read a sermon of St Austin on the thirty-sixth psalm, in which that father treats of the world

and the short duration of human life, he felt within him strong desires of embracing the monastic state.

Huneric, the Arian king, had driven most of the orthodox bishops from their sees. One of these, named Faustus, had erected a monastery in Byzacena. It was to him that the young nobleman addressed himself for admittance; but Faustus immediately objecting the tenderness of his constitution, discouraged his desires with words of some harshness: "Go," said he, "and first learn to live in the world abstracted from its pleasures. Who can well suppose that you, on a sudden, relinquishing a life of softness and ease, can take up with our coarse diet and clothing, and can inure yourself to our watchings and fastings?" The saint, with downcast eyes, modestly replied: "He who hath inspired me with the will to serve him, can also furnish me with courage and strength." This humble, yet resolute answer, induced Faustus to admit on trial. The saint was then in the twenty-second year of his age. The news of so unthought of an event both surprised and edified the whole country; many even imitated the example of the governor. But Mariana, his mother, in transports of grief, ran to the monastery, crying out at the gates: "Faustus! restore to me my son; to the people their governor: the church always protects widows; why then rob you me, a desolate widow, of my son?" She persisted several days in the same tears and cries. Nothing that Faustus could urge was sufficient to calm her, or prevail with her to depart without her son. This was certainly as great a trial of Fulgentius's resolution as it could well be put to; but the love of God, having the ascendant in his breast, gave him a complete victory over all the suggestions of nature: Faustus approved his vocation, and accordingly recommended him to the brethren. The saint having now obtained all he wished for in this world, made over his estates to his mother, to be discretionally disposed of by her in favour of his brother, as soon as he should be arrived at a proper age. He totally abstained from oil and everything savoury; from wine also, drinking only water. His mortifications brought on him a dangerous illness; yet after recovery he abated nothing in them. The persecution breaking out anew, Faustus was obliged to withdraw; and our saint, with his consent, repaired to a neighbouring monastery, of which Felix, the abbot, would fain resign to him the government. Fulgentius was much startled at the proposal, but at length was prevailed upon to consent that they should jointly execute the functions. It was admirable to observe with what harmony these two holy abbots for six years governed the house. No contradiction ever took place between them: each always contended to comply with the will of his colleague. Felix undertook the management of the temporal concerns; Fulgentius's province was to preach and instruct.

In the year 499, the country being ravaged by an irruption of the Numidians, the two abbots were necessitated to fly to Sicca Veneria, a

city of the proconsular province of Africa. Here it was that an Arian priest ordered them to be apprehended and scourged on account of their preaching the consubstantiality of the Son of God. Felix, seeing the executioners seize first on Fulgentius, cried out: "Spare that poor brother of mine, whose delicate complexion cannot bear torments; let them rather be my portion, who am strong of body." They accordingly, at the instigation of this wicked priest, fell on Felix first, and the old man endured their stripes with the greatest alacrity. When it was Fulgentius's turn to experience the same rigorous treatment, he bore the lashes with great patience; but feeling the pain excessive, that he might gain a little respite and recruit his spirits, he requested his judge to give ear to something he had to impart to him. The executioners thereupon being commanded to desist, he began to entertain him with an account of his travels. This savage monster expected nothing more than some overtures to be proposed to him of an intention to yield; but finding himself disappointed, in the utmost rage, ordered his torments to be redoubled. At length having glutted his barbarity, the confessors were dismissed, their clothes rent, their bodies inhumanly torn, and their beards and hair plucked off. The very Arians were ashamed of such cruelty, and their bishop offered to punish the priest if Fulgentius would but undertake his prosecution. His answer was, that a Christian is never allowed to seek revenge; and for their part it was incumbent on them not to lose the advantage of patience, and the blessings accruing from the forgiving of injuries. The two abbots, to avoid an additional effort of the fury of these heretics, travelled to Ididi, on the confines of Mauritania. Here Fulgentius went aboard a ship for Alexandria, being desirous, for the sake of greater perfection, to visit the deserts of Egypt, renowned for the sanctity of the solitaries who dwelt there. But the vessel touching at Sicily, St Eulalius, abbot at Syracuse, diverted him from his intended voyage, on assuring him, that "a perfidious dissension had severed this country from the communion of Peter,"<sup>1</sup> meaning that Egypt was full of heretics, with whom those that dwelt there were obliged either to join in communion, or be deprived of the sacraments. The liberality and hospitality of Fulgentius to the poor, out of the small pittance he received for his particular subsistence, made Eulalius condemn himself of remissness in those virtues, and for the future imitate so laudable an example.

Our saint having laid aside the thoughts of pursuing his voyage to Alexandria, embarked for Rome, to offer up his prayers at the tombs of the apostles. Fulgentius returned home in a short time after, and was received with incredible joy. He built a spacious monastery in Byzacena, but retired to a cell himself, which was situate on the seashore. Here his time was employed in writing, reading, prayer, mortification, and the manual

<sup>1</sup> A communione Petri perfida dissentie separavit. Vit. St Fulg. c. 12.

labour of making mats and umbrellas of palm-tree leaves. Faustus, who was his bishop, obliged him to resume the government of his monastery; and many places at the same time sought him for their bishop. King Thrasimund having prohibited by edict the ordination of orthodox bishops, several sees by this means had been long vacant and destitute of pastors. The orthodox prelates resolved to remedy this inconveniency, as they effectually did; but the king receiving intelligence of the matter, caused Victor, the primate of Carthage, to be apprehended. All this time our saint lay concealed, though sought after eagerly by many citizens for their bishop. Thinking the danger over, he appeared again: but Ruspa, now a little town, called Alfaques, in the district of Tunis, still remained without a pastor; and by the consent of the primate, whilst detained in the custody of the king's messenger, Fulgentius was forcibly taken out of his cell, and consecrated bishop in 508.

His new dignity made no alteration in his manners. He never wore the *orarium*, a kind of stole then used by bishops, nor other clothes than his usual coarse garb, which was the same in winter and summer. He went sometimes barefoot: he never undressed to take rest, and always rose to prayer before the midnight office. His diet chiefly consisted of pulse and herbs, with which he contented himself, without consulting the palate's gratification by borrowed tastes: but in more advanced years, finding his sight impaired by such a regimen, he admitted the use of a little oil. It was only in very considerable bodily indispositions, that he suffered a drop or two of wine to be mingled with the water which he drank; and he never could be prevailed upon in any seeming necessity to use the least quantity of flesh-meat, from the time of his monastic profession till his death. His modesty, meekness, and humility, gained him the affections of all, even of the ambitious deacon Felix, who had opposed his election, and whom the saint received and treated with the most cordial charity. His great love for a recluse life induced him to build a monastery near his own house at Ruspa, which he designed to put under the direction of his ancient friend Felix; but before the building could be completed, or he acquit himself to his wish of his episcopal duties, orders were issued from King Thrasimund, for his banishment to Sardinia, with others, to the number of sixty orthodox bishops. Fulgentius, though the youngest of this venerable body who were transported from Carthage to Sardinia, was notwithstanding their sole oracle in all doubts, and their tongue and pen upon all occasions; and not only of them, but even of the whole church of Africa. Pope Symmachus, out of his pastoral care and charity, sent every year provisions in money and clothes to these champions of Christ. A letter of this pope to them is still extant, in which he encourages and comforts them; and it was at the same time that he sent them certain relics of SS. Nazarius and Romanus; "that the example and *patronage*," as he expresses it, "of those generous

soldiers of Christ, might animate the confessors to fight valiantly the battles of the Lord." Saint Fulgentius, with some companions, converted his house at Cagliari into a monastery; which immediately became the comfort of all in affliction, the refuge of the poor, and the oracle to which the whole country resorted for deciding their controversies without appeal. In this retirement the saint composed many learned treatises for confirming and instructing the faithful in Africa. King Thrasimund, hearing that he was their principal support, and their invincible advocate, was desirous of seeing him; and having accordingly sent for him, appointed him lodgings in Carthage. The king then drew up a set of objections, to which he required an immediate answer: the saint without hesitation complied with and discharged the injunction; and this is supposed to be his book, entitled, "An Answer to Ten Objections." The king equally admired his humility and learning, and the orthodox triumphed exceedingly in the advantage their cause gained by this piece. To prevent a second time the same effect, the king, when he sent him new objections, ordered them to be only read to him. Fulgentius refused to give an answer in writing, unless he was allowed to take a copy of them. He addressed, however, to the king an ample and modest confutation of Arianism, which we have under the title of his "Three Books to King Thrasimund." The prince was pleased with the work, and granted him permission to reside at Carthage; till upon repeated complaints from the Arian bishops of the success of his preaching, which threatened, they said, a total extinction of their sect in Carthage, he was sent back to Sardinia in 520. Being ready to go aboard the ship, he said to a Catholic, whom he saw weeping: "Grieve not, Juliatus!" for that was his name, "I shall shortly return, and we shall see the true faith of Christ flourishing again in this kingdom, with full liberty to profess it; but divulge not this secret to any." The event confirmed the truth of the prediction.

King Thrasimund died in 523, having nominated Hilderic his successor. Knowing him inclined to favour the orthodox, he exacted from him an oath, that he would never restore their profession. To evade this, Hilderic, before the death of his predecessor, signed an order for the liberty of the orthodox churches, but never had the courage to declare himself of the same belief; his lenity having quite degenerated into softness and indolence. However, the professors of the true faith called home their pastors. The ship which brought them back was received at Carthage with the greatest demonstrations of joy: the shore echoed far and near with repeated acclamations, more particularly when Fulgentius appeared on the upper deck of the vessel. The confessors went straight to the church of St Agileus, to return thanks to God, and were accompanied by thousands; but on their way, being surprised with a sudden storm, the people, to show their singular regard for Fulgentius, made a kind of umbrella over his head with their

cloaks, to defend him from the inclemency of the storm. The saint hastened to his own church, and immediately set about the reformation of the abuses that had crept in during the persecution, which had now continued seventy years; but this reformation was carried on with a sweetness that won sooner or later the hearts of the most vicious. In a council held at Junque, in 524, a certain bishop, named Quodvultdeus, disputed the precedence with our saint, who made no reply, though he would not oppose the council, which ordered him to take the first place. The other resented this as an injury offered to the dignity of his see; and St Fulgentius, in another council soon after, publicly requested that Quodvultdeus might be allowed the precedence.

He bore the violent pains of his last illness for seventy days with admirable patience, having this prayer almost always in his mouth: "Lord, grant me patience now, and hereafter mercy and pardon." The physicians advised him the use of baths; to whom he answered, "Can baths make a mortal man escape death, when his life is arrived at its final period?" He would abate nothing of his usual austerities, without an absolute necessity. In his agony, calling for his clergy and monks, who were all in tears, he begged pardon if he had ever offended any one of them; he comforted them, gave them some short moving instructions, and calmly breathed forth his pious soul in the year 533, and of his age the sixty-fifth, on the 1st of January, on which day his name occurs in many calendars soon after his death, and in the Roman; but in some few, on the 16th of May; perhaps the day on which his relics were translated to Bourges, in France, about the year 714, where they still remain deposited. His disciple relates that Pontian, a neighbouring bishop, was assured in a vision of his glorious immortality. The veneration for his virtues was such, that he was interred within the church, contrary to the law and custom of that age, as is remarked by the author of his life. St Fulgentius proposed to himself St Austin for a model; and as a true disciple, imitated him in his conduct, faithfully expounding his doctrine, and imbibing his spirit.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 1 :*

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD, NEW YEAR'S DAY: ST ALMACHIUS or Telemachus whose death, about 400, put an end to the cruel shows in the arena. He protested against gladiatorial fights and was killed by the populace. ST CLARUS, Abbot: ST CONCORDIUS, martyr, about 178: ST EUGENDUS, Abbot: ST FANCHEA, virgin, 585: ST FELIX OF BOURGES, Bishop, 580: ST FULGENTIUS: BLESSED HUGOLINUS A GUALDO, 1260: BLESSED JOSEPH M. TOMMASI, Cardinal, works and honoured by Catholics and Anglicans as a prince of liturgists: ST ODILO or OLON, sixth Abbot of Cluny, 1049, to whom was due the rapid development of this celebrated monastery: ST WILLIAM, Abbot of St Benignus (WILLIAM OF DIJON), 1031: and BLESSED ZDISLAVA BERKA, matron.

JANUARY 2

## ST MACARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, ANCHORET

(A.D. 394)

[From Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis, who had been his disciple, c. 20. Rufin, Socrates, and others in Rosweide, D'Andilly, Cotelier, and Bollandus, p. 85. See Tillemont, t. viii. p. 626. Bulteau, Hist. Mon. d'Orient, lib. i. c. 9, p. 128.]

ST MACARIUS the younger, a citizen of Alexandria, followed the business of a confectioner. Desirous to serve God with his whole heart, he forsook the world in the flower of his age, and spent upwards of sixty years in the deserts in the exercise of fervent penance and contemplation. He first retired into Thebais, or Upper Egypt, about the year 335. Having learned the maxims, and being versed in the practice of the most perfect virtue, under masters renowned for their sanctity, still aiming, if possible, at greater perfection, he quitted the Upper Egypt, and came to the Lower, before the year 373. In this part were three deserts almost adjoining to each other: that of Sceté, so called from a town of the same name on the borders of Lybia; that of the Cells, contiguous to the former, this name being given to it on account of the multitude of hermit-cells with which it abounded; and a third, which reached to the western branch of the Nile, called from a great mountain, the desert of Nitria. St Macarius had a cell in each of these deserts. When he dwelt in that of Nitria, it was his custom to give advice to strangers, but his chief residence was in that of the Cells. Each anchorer had here his separate cell, which he made his continued abode, except on Saturday and Sunday, when all assembled in one church to celebrate the divine mysteries, and partake of the holy communion. If any one was absent, he was concluded to be sick, and was visited by the rest. When a stranger came to live among them, every one offered him his cell, and was ready to build another for himself. Their cells were not within sight of each other. Their manual labour, which was that of making baskets or mats, did not interrupt the prayer of the heart. A profound silence reigned throughout the whole desert. Our saint received here the dignity of priesthood, and shone as a bright sun influencing this holy company, whilst St Macarius the elder lived no less eminent in the wilderness of Sceté, forty miles distant. Palladius has recorded<sup>1</sup> a memorable instance of the great self-denial professed and observed by these holy hermits. A present was made of a newly gathered bunch of grapes to St Macarius: the holy man carried it to a neighbouring monk who was sick; he sent it to another: it passed in like manner to all the cells in the desert, and was brought back to Macarius, who was exceedingly rejoiced to perceive the abstinence of his brethren, but would not eat of the grapes himself.

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Lausiac, c. 20.

The austerities of all the inhabitants of that desert were extraordinary, but St Macarius in this regard far surpasses the rest. For seven years together he lived only on raw herbs and pulse, and for the three following years contented himself with four or five ounces of bread a day, and consumed only one little vessel of oil in a year, as Palladius assures us. His watchings were not less surprising, as the same author informs us. God had given him a body capable of bearing the greatest rigours; and his fervour was so intense, that whatever spiritual exercise he heard of, or saw practised by others, he resolved to copy the same. The reputation of the monastery of Tabenna, under St Pachomius, drew him to this place in disguise, some time before the year 349. St Pachomius told him that he seemed too far advanced in years to begin to accustom himself to their fastings and watchings; but at length admitted him, on condition he would observe all the rules and mortifications of the house. Lent approaching soon after, the monks were assiduous in preparations to pass that holy time in austerities, each according to his strength and fervour; some by fasting one, others two, three, or four days, without any kind of nourishment; some standing all day, others only sitting at their work. Macarius took some palm-tree leaves steeped in water, as materials for his work, and standing in a private corner, passed the whole time without eating, except a few green cabbage leaves on Sundays. His hands were employed in almost continual labour, and his heart conversed with God by prayer. If he left his station on any pressing occasion, he never stayed one moment longer than necessity required. Such a prodigy astonished the monks, who even remonstrated to the abbot at Easter against a singularity of this nature, which, if tolerated, might on several accounts be prejudicial to their community. St Pachomius entreated God to know who this stranger was; and learning by revelation that he was the great Macarius, embraced him, thanked him for his edifying visit, and desired him to return to his desert, and there offer up his prayers for them.<sup>1</sup> Our saint happened one day inadvertently to kill a gnat that was biting him in his cell; reflecting that he had lost the opportunity of suffering that mortification, he hastened from his cell for the marshes of Sceté, which abounded with great flies, whose stings pierced even wild boars. There he continued six months exposed to those ravaging insects; and to such a degree was his whole body disfigured by them with sores and swellings, that when he returned he was only to be known by his voice.<sup>2</sup> Some authors relate<sup>3</sup> that he did this to overcome a temptation of the flesh.

The virtue of this great saint was often exercised with temptations. One was a suggestion to quit his desert and go to Rome, to serve the sick in the hospitals; which, by due reflection, he discovered to be a secret artifice of vainglory inciting him to attract the eyes and esteem of the

<sup>1</sup> Pallad. Laus. c. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Rosweide, b. viii. c. 20, p. 722.



world. True humility alone could discover the snare which lurked under the specious gloss of holy charity. Finding this enemy extremely importunate, he threw himself on the ground in his cell, and cried out to the fiends: "Drag me hence, if you can, by force, for I will not stir." Thus he lay till night, and by this vigorous resistance they were quite disarmed.<sup>1</sup> As soon as he arose they renewed the assault; and he, to stand firm against them, filled two great baskets with sand, and laying them on his shoulders, travelled along the wilderness. A person of his acquaintance meeting him, asked him what he meant, and made an offer of easing him of his burden; but the saint made no other reply than this: "I am tormenting my tormentor." He returned home in the evening, much fatigued in body, but freed from the temptation. Palladius informs us that St Macarius, desiring to enjoy more perfectly the sweets of heavenly contemplation, at least for five days without interruption, immured himself within his cell for this purpose, and said to his soul: "Having taken up thy abode in heaven, where thou hast God and his holy angels to converse with, see that thou descend not thence: regard not earthly things." The two first days his heart overflowed with divine delights; but on the third he met with so violent a disturbance from the devil, that he was obliged to stop short of his design, and return to his usual manner of life. Contemplative souls often desire, in times of heavenly consolation, never to be interrupted in the glorious employment of love and praise: but the functions of Martha, the frailty and the necessities of the human frame, and the temptations of the devil, force them, though reluctant, from their beloved object. Nay, God oftentimes withdraws himself, as the saint observed on this occasion, to make them sensible of their own weakness, and that this life is a state of trial. St Macarius once saw in a vision devils closing the eyes of the monks to drowsiness, and tempting them by divers methods to distractions, during the time of public prayer. Some, as often as they approached, chased them away by a secret supernatural force, whilst others were in dalliance with their suggestions. The saint burst into sighs and tears; and, when prayer was ended, admonished every one of his distractions, and of the snares of the enemy, with an earnest exhortation to employ, in that sacred duty, a more than ordinary watchfulness against his attacks.<sup>2</sup>

Palladius, who, from 391, lived three years under our saint, was eyewitness to several miracles wrought by him. He relates that a certain priest, whose head, in a manner shocking to behold, was consumed by a cancerous sore, came to his cell, but was refused admittance; nay, the saint at first would not even speak to him. Palladius, by earnest entreaties, strove to prevail upon him to give at least some answer to so great an object of compassion. Macarius, on the contrary, urged that he was unworthy, and that God, to punish him for a sin of the flesh he was addicted to, had

<sup>1</sup> Pallad. Laus. c. 20.<sup>2</sup> Rosweide, Vit. Patr. lib. ii. c. 29, p. 481.

afflicted him with this disorder: however, that upon his sincere repentance, and promise never more during his life to presume to celebrate the divine mysteries, he would intercede for his cure. The priest confessed his sin, with a promise, pursuant to the ancient canonical discipline, never after to perform any priestly function. The saint thereupon absolved him by the imposition of hands; and a few days after the priest came back perfectly healed, glorifying God, and giving thanks to his servant. Palladius found himself tempted to sadness, on a suggestion from the devil, that he made no progress in virtue, and that it was to no purpose for him to remain in the desert. He consulted his master, who bade him persevere with fervour, never dwell on the temptation, and always answer instantly the fiend: "My love for Jesus Christ will not suffer me to quit my cell, where I am determined to abide, in order to please and serve him agreeably to his will."

The two saints of the name of Macarius happened one day to cross the Nile together in a boat, when certain tribunes, or principal officers, who were there with their numerous trains, could not help observing to each other that those men, from the cheerfulness of their aspect, must be exceeding happy in their poverty. Macarius of Alexandria, alluding to their name, which in Greek signifies *happy*, made this answer: "You have reason to call us happy, for this is our name. But if we are happy in despising the world, are not you miserable who live slaves to it?" These words, uttered with a tone of voice expressive of an interior conviction of their truth, had such an effect on the tribune who first spoke, that hastening home, he distributed his fortune among the poor, and embraced an eremitical life. In 375, both these saints were banished for the catholic faith, at the instigation of Lucius, the Arian patriarch of Alexandria. Our saint died in the year 394, as Tillemont shows from Palladius. The Latins commemorate him on the 2nd, the Greeks with the elder Macarius on the 19th of January.

In the desert of Nitria there subsists at this day a monastery which bears the name of St Macarius. The monastic rule, called St Macarius's in the code of rules, is ascribed to this of Alexandria. St Jerom seems to have copied some things from it in his letter to Rusticus. The concord, or collection of rules, gives us another, under the names of the two SS. Macariuses; Serapion (of Arsinoe, or the other of Nitria); Paphnutius (of Becbale, priest of Sceté); and thirty-four other abbots: it was probably collected from their discipline, or regulations and example. According to this latter, the monks fasted the whole year, except on Sundays, and the time from Easter to Whitsuntide; they observed the strictest poverty, and divided the day between manual labour and hours of prayer; hospitality was much recommended in this rule, but, for the sake of recollection, it was strictly forbid for any monk, except one who was deputed to entertain guests, ever to speak to any stranger without particular leave. The definition

of a monk or anchoret, given by the abbot Rancè of La Trappe, is a lively portraiture of the great Macarius in the desert: when, says he, a soul relishes God in solitude, she thinks no more of anything but heaven, and forgets the earth, which has nothing in it that can now please her; she burns with the fire of divine love, and sighs only after God, regarding death as her greatest advantage: nevertheless they will find themselves much mistaken, who, leaving the world, imagine they shall go to God by straight paths, by roads sown with lilies and roses, in which they will have no difficulties to conquer, but that the hand of God will turn aside whatever could raise any in their way, or disturb the tranquillity of their retreat: on the contrary, they must be persuaded that temptations will everywhere follow them, that there is neither state nor place in which they can be exempt, that the peace which God promises is procured amidst tribulations, as the rose-buds amidst thorns; God has not promised his servants that they shall not meet with trials, but that with the temptation he will give them grace to be able to bear it: heaven is offered to us on no other conditions; it is a kingdom of conquest, the prize of victory—but, O God, what a prize!

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 2 :*

ST ADELHARD or Adeldard, Abbot, 827, first cousin to Charlemagne. He forsook the Court and retired to a monastery in his twentieth year. Humility, zeal and austerity of life distinguished him; died January 1 in his seventy-third year: BLESSED AIRALDUS, Bishop: ST ASPASIUS, Bishop, about 560: BLESSED BENTIVOGLIA DE BONIS, Confessor, 1232: BLESSED GASPARE DEL BUFALO, Confessor, 1837; founded the Missionaries of the Most precious Blood and was a devoted missionary, reconciling innumerable souls to God: BLESSED GERARD CAGNOLI, Confessor, 1345, much honoured in Sicily: ST MACARIUS THE YOUNGER: ST MUNCHIN, 640, Patron of the Diocese of Limerick, described as "the Wise": BLESSED STEPHANA QUINZANI, virgin, 1530: and ST VINCENCIANUS, hermit, about 672.

### JANUARY 3

## ST GENEVIEVE, OR GENOVEFA, VIRGIN, CHIEF PATRONESS OF THE CITY OF PARIS

HER father's name was Severus, and her mother's Gerontia: she was born about the year 422, at Nanterre, a small village four miles from Paris, near the famous modern stations, or Calvary, adorned with excellent sculptures, representing our Lord's Passion, on Mount Valerien. When St Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, went with St Lupus into Britain to oppose the Pelagian heresy, he lay at Nanterre in his way. The inhabitants flocked about them to receive their blessing, and St Germanus made them an exhortation, during which he took particular notice of Genevieve, though only seven years of age. After his discourse he inquired for her parents, and addressing himself to them, foretold their daughter's future sanctity, and said that she would perfectly accomplish the resolution she had taken of serving God, and that others would imitate her example. He then asked Genevieve whether it was not her desire to serve God in a state of perpetual

virginity, and to bear no other title than that of a spouse of Jesus Christ. The virgin answered that this was what she had long desired, and begged that by his blessing she might be from that moment consecrated to God. The holy prelate went to the church of the place, followed by the people, and, during long singing of psalms and prayers, says Constantius,<sup>1</sup> that is, during the recital of None and Vespers, as the author of the life of St Genevieve expresses it,<sup>2</sup> he held his hand upon the virgin's head. After he had supped, he dismissed her, giving her a strict charge to her parents to bring her again to him very early the next morning. The father complied with the commission, and St Germanus asked Genevieve whether she remembered the promise she had made to God. She said she did, and declared she would, by the divine assistance, faithfully perform it. The bishop gave her a brass medal, on which a cross was engraved, to wear always about her neck, to put her in mind of the consecration she had made of herself to God; and at the same time, he charged her never to wear bracelets, or necklaces of pearls, gold or silver, or any other ornaments of vanity. All this she most religiously observed, and considering herself as the spouse of Christ, gave herself up to the most fervent practices of devotion and penance. From the words of St Germanus, in his exhortation to St Genevieve never to wear jewels, Baillet and some others infer that she must have been a person of quality and fortune: but the ancient Breviary and constant tradition of the place assure us that her father was a poor shepherd.

About fifteen years of age, she was presented to the Bishop of Paris to receive the religious veil at his hand, together with two other persons of the same sex. Though she was the youngest of the three, the bishop placed her first, saying that heaven had already sanctified her; by which he seems to have alluded to the promise she had already made, in the presence of SS. Germanus and Lupus, of consecrating herself to God. From that time she frequently ate only twice in the week, on Sundays and Thursdays. Her food was barley bread with a few beans. At the age of fifty, by the command of certain bishops, she mitigated this austerity so far as to allow herself a moderate use of fish and milk. Her prayer was almost continual, and generally attended with a large flow of tears. After the death of her parents she left Nanterre, and settled with her grandmother at Paris, but sometimes undertook journeys upon motives of charity, and illustrated the cities of Meaux, Laon, Tours, Orleans, and all other places wherever she went, with miracles and remarkable predictions. God permitted her to meet with some severe trials; for at a certain time all persons indiscriminately seemed to be in a combination against her, and persecuted her under the opprobrious names of visionary, hypocrite, and the like imputations, all tending to asperse her innocence. The arrival of St Germanus

<sup>1</sup> Constant. in vit. S. Germani Altiss. lib. i. c. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Apud Bolland.

at Paris, probably on his second journey to Britain, for some time silenced her calumniators; but it was not long ere the storm broke out anew. Her enemies were fully determined to drown her, when the Archdeacon of Auxerre arrived with *Eulogies*, or blessed bread, sent her by St Germanus, as a testimony of his particular esteem for her virtues, and a token of communion. This seems to have happened whilst St Germanus was absent in Italy in 449, a little before his death. This circumstance, so providentially opportune, converted the prejudices of her calumniators into a singular veneration for her during the remainder of her life. The Franks or French had then possessed themselves of the better part of Gaul, and Childeric, their king, took Paris. During the long blockade of that city, the citizens being extremely distressed by famine, St Genevieve, as the author of her life relates, went out at the head of a company who were sent to procure provisions, and brought back from Arcis-sur-Aube and Troyes several boats laden with corn. Nevertheless, Childeric, when he had made himself master of Paris, though always a pagan, respected St Genevieve, and, upon her intercession, spared the lives of many prisoners, and did several other acts of clemency and bounty. Our saint, out of her singular devotion to St Dionysius and his companions, the apostles of the country, frequently visited their tombs at the borough of Catulliacum, which many think the borough since called St Denys. She also excited the zeal of many pious persons to build there a church in honour of St Dionysius, which King Dagobert I afterwards rebuilt with a stately monastery in 629. St Genevieve likewise performed several pilgrimages, in company with other holy virgins, to the shrine of St Martin at Tours. These journeys of devotion she sanctified by the exercises of holy recollection and austere penance.

King Clovis, who embraced the faith in 496, listened often with deference to the advice of St Genevieve, and granted liberty to several captives at her request. Upon the report of the march of Attila with his army of Huns, the Parisians were preparing to abandon their city, but St Genevieve persuaded them, in imitation of Judith and Hester, to endeavour to avert the scourge, by fasting, watching, and prayer. Many devout persons of her sex passed many days with her in prayer in the baptistry; from whence the particular devotion to St Genevieve, which is practised at St John-le-rond, the ancient public baptistry of the church of Paris, seems to have taken rise. She assured the people of the protection of heaven, and their deliverance; and though she was long treated by many as an impostor, the event verified the prediction, that barbarian suddenly changing the course of his march, probably by directing it towards Orleans.

Our authority attributes to St Genevieve the first design of the magnificent church which Clovis began to build in honour of SS. Peter and Paul, by the pious counsel of his wife Saint Clotilda, by whom it was finished several years after; for he only laid the foundation a little before

his death, which happened in 511. St Genevieve died about the same year, probably five weeks after that prince, on the 3rd of January, 512, being eighty-nine years old. Some think she died before King Clovis. The tombs of St Genevieve and King Clovis were near together. Immediately after the saint was buried, the people raised an oratory of wood over her tomb, as her historian assures us, and this was soon changed into the stately church built under the invocation of SS. Peter and Paul. From this circumstance, we gather that her tomb was situated in a part of this church, which was only built after her death. Her tomb, though empty, is still shown in the subterraneous church, or vault, betwixt those of Prudentius, and St Ceraunus, Bishop of Paris. But her relics were enclosed by St Eligius in a costly shrine, adorned with gold and silver, which he made with his own hands about the year 630, as St Owen relates in his life. The author of the original life of St Genevieve concludes it by a description of the basilic which Clovis and St Clotilda erected, adorned with a triple portico, in which were painted the histories of the patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and confessors. This church was several times plundered, and at length burnt, by the Normans. When it was rebuilt, soon after the year 856, the relics of St Genevieve were brought back. The miracles which were performed there from the time of her burial rendered this church famous all over France, so that at length it began to be known only by her name. The city of Paris has frequently received sensible proofs of the divine protection through her intercession. The most famous instance is that called the miracle of *Des Ardens*, or of the burning fever. In 1129, in the reign of Louis VI, a pestilential fever, with a violent inward heat, and pains in the bowels, swept off, in a short time, fourteen thousand persons, nor could the art of physicians afford any relief. Stephen, Bishop of Paris, with the clergy and people, implored the divine mercy, by fasting and supplications. Yet the distemper began not to abate till the shrine of St Genevieve was carried in a solemn procession to the cathedral. During that ceremony many sick persons were cured by touching the shrine, and of all that then lay ill of that distemper in the whole town, only three died, the rest recovered, and no others fell ill. Pope Innocent II coming to Paris the year following, after having passed a careful scrutiny on the miracle, ordered an annual festival in commemoration of it on the 26th of November, which is still kept at Paris. A chapel near the cathedral, called anciently St Genevieve's the Little, erected near the house in which she died, afterwards from this miracle, though it was wrought not at this chapel, but chiefly at the cathedral, as Le Beuf demonstrates, was called St Genevieve Des Ardens, which was demolished in 1747 to make place for the Foundling Hospital.<sup>1</sup> Both before and since that time, it is the custom in extraordinary public calamities to carry the shrine of St Gene-

<sup>1</sup> *De Miraculo Ardentium*. See Anonym ap. Bolland. et Brev Paris, ad 26 Nov.

vieve, accompanied by those of St Marcel, St Aurea, St Lucan martyr, St Landry, St Merry, St Paxentius, St Magloire, and others, in a solemn procession to the cathedral; on which occasion the regular canons of St Genevieve walk barefoot, and at the right hand of the chapter of the cathedral, and the abbot walks on the right hand of the archbishop. The present rich shrine of St Genevieve was made by the abbot, and the relics enclosed in it in 1242. See the "Ancient Life of St Genevieve," written by an anonymous author, eighteen years after her death, of which the best edition is given by F. Charpentier, a Genevevan regular canon, in octavo, in 1697. It is interpolated in several editions. Bollandus has added another more modern life; see also Tillemont, t. xvi. p. 621, and notes *ibid.* p. 802. Likewise, Gallia Christiana Nova, t. vii. p. 700.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 3 :*

ST ANTHERUS, Pope for only one month and ten days; martyred, it is said for having caused the Acts of the martyrs to be collected and preserved in the archives of the Roman Church. The site of his sepulchre was discovered in 1854: ST BERTILIA, virgin, 705: ST FLORENTIUS, Bishop of Vienne, martyred about 275: ST GENEVIEVE: ST GORDIUS, martyr, condemned in the persecution under Maximilian. For "having obstinately defended the law of a man crucified," the sentence ran that "he himself be nailed to a cross": ST PETER BALSAM, Martyr, 311: ST THEOPHEMPTUS, Bishop and martyr, towards the end of the third century.

#### JANUARY 4

### ST TITUS, DISCIPLE OF ST PAUL, BISHOP

[See St Paul, ep. ad Tit. and 1 and 2 ad Cor.; also, Tillemont, t. ii. Calmet, t. viii. Le Quien Oriens Christianus, t. ii. p. 256. F. Farlet Illyrici sacri. t. i. p. 354, ad 392.]

ST Titus was born a Gentile, and seems to have been converted by St Paul, who calls him his son in Christ. His extraordinary virtue and merit gained him the particular esteem and affection of this apostle, for we find him employed as his secretary and interpreter; and he styles him his brother, and co-partner in his labours; commends exceedingly his solicitude and zeal for the salvation of his brethren,<sup>1</sup> and in the tenderest manner expresses the comfort and support he found in him,<sup>2</sup> insomuch that, on a certain occasion, he declared that he found no rest in his spirit because at Troas he had not met Titus.<sup>3</sup> In the year 51, he accompanied him to the council that was held at Jerusalem, on the subject of the Mosaic rites. Though the apostle had consented to the circumcision of Timothy, in order to render his ministry acceptable among the Jews, he would not allow the same in Titus, apprehensive of giving thereby a sanction to the error of certain false brethren, who contended that the ceremonial institutes of the Mosaic law were not abolished by the law of grace. Towards the close of the year 56 St Paul sent Titus from Ephesus to Corinth, with full commission to remedy the several subjects of scandal, as also to allay the dissensions in that church. He was there received with great testimonies of respect, and was perfectly

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 16; xii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 13.

satisfied with regard to the penance and submission of the offenders; but could not be prevailed upon to accept from them any present, not even so much as his own maintenance. His love for that church was very considerable, and at their request he interceded with St Paul for the pardon of the incestuous man. He was sent the same year by the apostle a second time to Corinth, to prepare the alms that church designed for the poor Christians at Jerusalem. All these particulars we learn from St Paul's two epistles to the Corinthians.

St Paul, after his first imprisonment, returning from Rome into the east, made some stay in the island of Crete, to preach there the faith of Jesus Christ: but the necessities of other churches requiring his presence elsewhere, he ordained his beloved disciple Titus bishop of that island, and left him to finish the work he had successfully begun. He ordered him to establish priests—that is, bishops, as St Jerom, St Chrysostom, and Theodoret expound it—in all the cities of the island. He sums up the principal qualities necessary for a bishop, and gives him particular advice touching his own conduct to his flock, exhorting him to hold to strictness of discipline, but seasoned with lenity. This epistle contains the rules of episcopal life, and, as such, we may regard it as faithfully copied in the life of this disciple. In the year 65 we find him sent by St Paul to preach in Dalmatia. He again returned to Crete, and settled the faith in that and the adjacent little island. All that can be affirmed further of him is, that he finished a laborious and holy life by a happy death in Crete, in a very advanced old age, some affirm in the ninety-fourth year of his age. The body of St Titus was kept with great veneration in the cathedral of Gortyna, the ruins of which city, the ancient metropolis of the island, situated six miles from Mount Ida, are still very remarkable. This city being destroyed by the Saracens in 823, these relics could never since be discovered: only the head of our saint was conveyed safe to Venice, and is venerated in the Ducal basilic of St Mark. (See *Creta Sacra*, Auctore Flaminio Cornelio, Senatore Veneto. Venetiis, anno 1755, de St Tito, t. i. pp. 189, 195.) St Titus has been looked upon in Crete as the first archbishop of Gortyna, which metropolitical see is fixed at Candia, since this new metropolis was built by the Saracens. The cathedral of the city of Candia, which now gives its name to the whole island, bears his name. The Turks leave this church in the hands of the Christians. The city of Candia was built in the ninth century, seventeen miles from the ancient Gortyn or Gortyna. Under the metropolitan of Candia, there are at present in this island eleven suffragan bishops of the Greek communion.

When St Paul assumed Titus to the ministry, this disciple was already a saint, and the apostle found in him all the conditions which he charged him so severely to require in those whom he should honour with the pastoral



charge. All who undertake the pastoral charge, besides a thorough acquaintance with the divine law, and the maxim and spirit of the gospel, and experience, discretion, and a knowledge of the heart of man, or his passions, must have seriously endeavoured to die to themselves by the habitual practice of self-denial, and a rooted humility; and must have been so well exercised in holy contemplation as to retain that habitual disposition of soul amidst exterior employments, and in them to be able still to say, "I sleep, and my heart watches";<sup>1</sup> that is, I sleep to all earthly things, and am awake only to my heavenly friend and spouse, being absorbed in the thoughts and desires of the most ardent love.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 4 :*

BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO, widow, the Umbrian mystical writer of whom Maximilian Sandaens, S.J., wrote that her doctrine had been drawn out of the book of life, Jesus Christ : St FERRIOLUS, Bishop of Uzès : St GREGORY, Bishop of Langres : St PHARAILDIS, virgin, very popular in Flanders : BLESSED ORINGA or Cristiana a Cruce, virgin : BLESSED ROGER OF ELLANT, an Englishman by birth, Confessor, 1160 : St RIGOBERT, or Robert, Archbishop of Rheims, 745 : BLESSED THOMAS PLUMTREE, martyr, who was rector of Stubton when Elizabeth came to the throne but, being unable to accept the new religion, resigned his living and taught in a school at Lincoln. He joined the "Northern Rising" as chaplain. Before his execution he was offered his life if he would conform : and St TITUS.

## JANUARY 5

### ST SIMEON STYLITES, C.

(A.D. 459)

[From the account given of him by Theodoret, one of the most judicious and most learned prelates of the church, who lived in the same country, and often visited him ; this account was written sixteen years before the saint's death. Also from St Simeon's life, written by Antony, his disciple, published genuine in Bollandus, and the same in Chaldaic, by Cosmas, a priest ; all three contemporaries and eye-witnesses. This work of Cosmas has been lately published by Monsignor Stephen Assemani,<sup>2</sup> from a Chaldaic MS. which he proves to have been written in the year 474, fifteen years only after the death of St Simeon. Also from the ancient lives of SS. Euthymius, Theodosius, Auxentius, and Daniel Stylites. Evagrius, Theodorus Lector, and other faithful writers of that and the following age mention the most wonderful actions of this saint. The severest critics do not object to this history, in which so many contemporary writers, several of them eye-witnesses, agree ; persons of undoubted veracity, virtue, and sagacity, who could not have conspired in a falsehood, nor could have imposed upon the world facts which were of their own nature public and notorious. See Tillemont, t. xiv.]

ST SIMEON was son to a poor shepherd in Cilicia, on the borders of Syria, and at first kept his father's sheep. Being only thirteen years of age, he was much moved by hearing the beatitudes one day read in the church, particularly these : "Blessed are they that mourn ; blessed are the clean of heart." The youth addressed himself to a certain old man to learn the meaning of those words ; and begged to know how the happiness they promised was to be obtained. He told him that continual prayer, watching, fasting, weeping, humiliation, and patient suffering of persecutions were pointed out by those texts as the road to *true happiness* ; and that a solitary life afforded the best opportunities for enforcing the practice of these good works, and establishing a man in solid virtue. Simeon, upon this, withdrew

<sup>1</sup> Cant. v.

<sup>2</sup> Act. Mart. t. ii. app. p. 229.

to a small distance, where, falling prostrate upon the ground, he besought Him who desires all may be saved to conduct him in the paths which lead to happiness and perfection; to the pursuit of which, under the help of his divine grace, he unreservedly from that moment devoted himself. At length, falling into a slumber, he was favoured with a vision, which it was usual with him afterwards to relate. He seemed to himself to be digging a pit for the foundation of a house, and that, as often as he stopped for taking a little breath, which was four times, he was commanded each time to *dig deeper*, till at length he was told he might desist, the pit being deep enough to receive the intended foundation, on which he would be able to raise a superstructure of what kind and to what height he pleased. "The event," says Theodoret, "verified the prediction; the actions of this wonderful man were so superior to nature, that they might well require the deepest foundation of humility and fervour whereon to raise and establish them."

Rising from the ground, he repaired to a monastery in that neighbourhood under the direction of a holy abbot called Timothy, and lay prostrate at the gate for several days, without either eating or drinking, begging to be admitted on the footing of the lowest servant of the house, and as a general drudge. His petition was granted, and he complied with the terms of it with great fervour and affection for four months. During this time he learned the Psalter by heart, the first task enjoined the novices; and his familiarity with the sacred oracles it contains greatly helped to nourish his soul in a spiritual life. Though yet in his tender youth, he practised all the austerities of the house; and, by his humility and charity, gained the goodwill of all the monks. Having here spent two years, he removed to the monastery of Heliodorus, a person endowed with an admirable spirit of prayer; and who, being then sixty-five years of age, had spent sixty-two of them in that community, so abstracted from the world as to be utterly ignorant of the most obvious things in it, as Theodoret relates, who was intimately acquainted with him. Here Simeon much increased his mortifications; for whereas those monks ate but once a day, which was towards night, he, for his part, made but one meal a week, which was on Sundays. These rigours, however, he moderated at the interposition of his superior's authority, and from that time was more private in his mortifications. With this view, judging the rough rope of the well, made of twisted palm-tree leaves, a proper instrument of penance, he tied it close about his naked body, where it remained unknown both to the community and his superior till such time as it having ate into his flesh, what he had privately done was discovered by the stench proceeding from the wound. Three days successively his clothes, which clung to it, were to be softened with liquids to disengage them; and the incisions of the physician, to cut the cord out of his body, were attended with such anguish and pain that he lay for some time as dead. On his recovery, the abbot, to prevent the ill consequences

such a dangerous singularity might occasion, to the prejudice of uniformity in monastic discipline, dismissed him.

After this he repaired to a hermitage at the foot of Mount Telnescin, or Thelanissa, where he came to a resolution of passing the whole forty days of Lent in a total abstinence, after the example of Christ, without either eating or drinking. Bassus, a holy priest, and abbot of two hundred monks, who was his director, and to whom he had communicated his design, had left him with ten loaves and water, that he might eat if he found it necessary. At the expiration of the forty days he came to visit him, and found the loaves and water untouched, but Simeon stretched out on the ground, almost without any signs of life. Taking a sponge, he moistened his lips with water, then gave him the blessed Eucharist. Simeon, having recovered a little, rose up, and chewed and swallowed by degrees a few lettuce-leaves and other herbs. This was his method of keeping Lent during the remainder of his life; and he had actually passed twenty-six Lents after this manner when Theodoret wrote his account of him, in which are these other particulars: that he spent the first part of the Lent in praising God standing; growing weaker, he continued his prayer sitting; and towards the end, finding his spirits almost quite exhausted, not able to support himself in any other posture, he lay on the ground. However, it is probable that in his advanced years he admitted some mitigation of this wonderful austerity. When on his pillar, he kept himself, during this fast, tied to a pole; but at length was able to fast the whole term without any support. Many attribute this to the strength of his constitution, which was naturally very robust, and had been gradually habituated to such an extraordinary abstinence. It is well known that the hot eastern climates afford surprising instances of long abstinence among the Indians.<sup>1</sup> A native of France has, within our memory, fasted the forty days of Lent almost in that manner. But few examples occur of persons fasting upwards of three or six days, unless prepared and inured by habit.

After three years spent in this hermitage, the saint removed to the top of the same mountain, where, throwing together some loose stones in the form of a wall, he made for himself an enclosure, but without any roof or shelter to protect him from the inclemencies of the weather, and to confirm his resolution of pursuing this manner of life, he fastened his right leg to a rock with a great iron chain. Meletius, vicar to the patriarch of Antioch, told him that a firm will, supported by God's grace, was sufficient to make him abide in his solitary enclosure without having recourse to any bodily restraint: hereupon the obedient servant of God sent for a smith, and had his chain knocked off.

The mountain began to be continually thronged, and the retreat his soul so much sighed after to be interrupted by the multitudes that flocked, even from remote and infidel countries, to receive his benediction, by which

<sup>1</sup> Lettres édifiantes et curieuses.

many sick recovered their health. Some were not satisfied unless they also touched him. The saint, to remove these causes of distraction, projected for himself a new and unprecedented manner of life. In 423, he erected a pillar six cubits high, and on it he dwelt four years; on a second, twelve cubits high, he lived three years; on a third, twenty-two cubits high, ten years; and on a fourth, forty cubits high, built for him by the people, he spent the last twenty years of his life. Thus he lived thirty-seven years on pillars, and was called Stylites, from the Greek word *stylos*, which signifies a pillar. This singularity was at first censured by all as a mark of vanity or extravagance. To make trial of his humility, an order was sent him, in the name of the neighbouring bishops and abbots, to quit his pillar and new manner of life. The saint, ready to obey the summons, was for stepping down; which the messenger seeing, said that, as he had shown a willingness to obey, it was their desire that he might follow his vocation in God. His pillar exceeded not three feet in diameter on the top, which made it impossible for him to lie extended on it; neither would he allow a seat. He only stooped, or leaned, to take a little rest, and often in the day bowed his body in prayer. A certain person once reckoned one thousand two hundred and forty-four such reverences of adoration made by him in one day. He made exhortations to the people twice a day. His garments were the skins of beasts, and he wore an iron collar about his neck. He never suffered any woman to come within the enclosure where his pillar stood. His disciple Antony mentions that he prayed most fervently for the soul of his mother after her decease.

God is sometimes pleased to conduct certain fervent souls through extraordinary paths, in which others would find only dangers of illusion, vanity, and self-will, which we cannot sufficiently guard ourselves against. We should, notwithstanding, consider that the sanctity of these fervent souls does not consist in such wonderful actions, or miracles, but in the perfection of their unfeigned charity, patience, and humility; and it was the exercise of these solid virtues that rendered so conspicuous the life of this saint; these virtues he nourished, and greatly increased, by fervent and assiduous prayer. He exhorted people vehemently against the horrible custom of swearing; as also to observe strict justice, to take no usury, to be assiduous at church and in holy prayer, and to pray for the salvation of souls. The great deference paid to his instructions, even by barbarians, is not to be expressed. Many Persians, Armenians, and Iberians, with the entire nation of the Lazi, in Colchis, were converted by his miracles and discourses, which they crowded to hear. Princes and queens of the Arabians came to receive his blessing. Vararanes V, King of Persia, though a cruel persecutor, respected him. The emperors Theodosius the younger, and Leo, often consulted him, and desired his prayers. The Emperor Marcian visited him, disguised in the dress of a private man.

By his advice the Empress Eudoxia abandoned the Eutychian party a little before her death. His miracles and predictions are mentioned at large in Theodoret and others. By an invincible patience he bore all afflictions, austerities, and rebukes, without ever mentioning them. He long concealed a horrible ulcer in his foot, swarming with maggots. He always sincerely looked upon and treated himself as the outcast of the world, and the last of sinners; and he spoke to all with the most engaging sweetness and charity. Domnus, patriarch of Antioch, administered unto him the holy communion on his pillar: undoubtedly he often received that benefit from others. In 459, according to Cosmas, on a Wednesday, the 2nd of September, this incomparable penitent, bowing on a pillar, as if intent on prayer, gave up the ghost, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. On the Friday following his corpse was conveyed to Antioch, attended by the bishops and the whole country. Many miracles, related by Evagrius,<sup>1</sup> Antony, and Cosmas, were wrought on this occasion; and the people immediately, over all the East, kept his festival with great solemnity.

The extraordinary manner of life which this saint led is a proof of the fervour with which he sought to live in the most perfect sequestration from creatures, and union with God and heaven. The most perfect accomplishment of the Divine Will was his only view, and the sole object of his desires; whence upon the least intimation of an order from a superior he was ready to leave his pillar; nor did he consider this undertaking as anything great or singular, by which he should appear distinguished from others. By humility he looked upon himself as justly banished from among men and hidden from the world in Christ. No one is to practise or aspire after virtue or perfection upon a motive of greatness, or of being exalted by it. This would be to fall into the snare of pride, which is to be feared under the cloak of sanctity itself. The foundation of Christian perfection is a love of humiliation, a sincere spirit of humility. The heroic practice of virtue must be undertaken, not because it is a sublime and elevated state, but because God calls us to it, and by it we do his will, and become pleasing to him. The path of the cross, or of contempt, poverty, and sufferings, was chosen by the Father for his divine Son, to repair his glory, and restore to man the spiritual advantages of which sin had robbed him. And the more perfectly we walk in his spirit, by the love and esteem of his cross, the greater share shall we possess in its incomparable advantages.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 5 :*

ST ÆMILIANA, virgin, aunt to St Gregory the Great, of whom our author gives an account on 24th December: BLESSED CONVOYON, Abbot: ST GERLAC, hermit, who lived seven years in the hollow of a tree: ST SIMEON STYLITES: ST SYNCLETICA, virgin, who consecrated herself early to God and retired to a lonely monument, where many women resorted to her for spiritual advice, owing to the fame of her sanctity. She foretold her own death, which took place about 400, when she was eighty, after terrible sufferings, borne with exemplary patience; and ST TELESPHORUS the eighth Pope, an early Bishop of Rome who kept the Easter festival on Sunday.

<sup>1</sup> Evagrius, lib. i. c. 13, 14.

JANUARY 6

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY AND OF THE THREE  
HOLY KINGS

EPIPHANY, which in the original Greek signifies appearance or manifestation, as St Austin observes,<sup>1</sup> is a festival principally solemnised in honour of the discovery Jesus Christ made of himself to the Magi, or wise men; who, soon after his birth, by a particular inspiration of Almighty God, came to adore him and bring him presents. Two other manifestations of our Lord are jointly commemorated on this day in the office of the church: that at his baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended on him in the visible form of a dove, and a voice from heaven was heard at the same time: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."<sup>2</sup> The third manifestation was that of his divine power at the performance of his first miracle, the changing of water into wine, at the marriage at Cana,<sup>3</sup> "by which he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him." Upon so many accounts ought this festival to challenge a more than ordinary regard and veneration; but from none more than us Gentiles, who, in the persons of the wise men, our first-fruits and forerunners, were on this day called to the faith and worship of the true God.

The call of the Gentiles had been foretold for many ages before in the clearest terms. David and Isaías abound with predictions of this import; the like is found in the other prophets; but their completion was a mercy reserved for the times of the Messiah. It was to him, who was also the consubstantial Son of God, that the eternal Father had made the promise of all "nations for his inheritance";<sup>4</sup> who being born the spiritual king of the whole world, for the salvation of "all men,"<sup>5</sup> would therefore manifest his coming both to those that "were near, and those that were afar off,"<sup>6</sup> that is, both to Jew and Gentile. Upon his birth, angels<sup>7</sup> were dispatched ambassadors to the Jews, in the persons of the poor shepherds, and a star was the divine messenger on this important errand to the Gentiles of the East; conformably to Balaam's prophecy,<sup>8</sup> who foretold the coming of the Messias by that sign.

The summons of the Gentiles to Bethlehem to pay homage to the world's Redeemer was obeyed by several whom the Scripture mentions under the name and title of *Magi*, or wise men; but is silent as to their number. The general opinion, supported by the authority of St Leo, Cæsarius, Bede, and others, declares for three. However, the number was small, comparatively to those many others that saw that star, no less than the wise men, but paid no regard to this voice of heaven: admiring, no

<sup>1</sup> St Aug. Serm. 203, ol. 64, de div.<sup>2</sup> Ps. ii. 8.<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.<sup>4</sup> Num. xxiv. 17.<sup>5</sup> Matt. iii. 17.<sup>6</sup> Eph. ii. 17.<sup>7</sup> Jo. ii. 11.<sup>8</sup> Luke ii. 10, 11.

doubt, its uncommon brightness, but culpably ignorant of the divine call in it, or hardening their hearts against its salutary impressions, overcome by their passions, and the dictates of self-love. In like manner do Christians, from the same cause, turn a deaf ear to the voice of the divine grace in their souls, and harden their hearts against it in such numbers, that, notwithstanding their call, their graces, and the mysteries wrought in their favour, it is to be feared that even among *them* many "are called, but few are chosen." It was the case with the Jews, "with the most of whom," St Paul says, "God was not well pleased."<sup>1</sup>

The wise men being come, by the guidance of the star, into Jerusalem, or near it, it there disappears: whereupon they reasonably suppose they are come to their journey's end, and upon the point of being blessed with the sight of the new-born king: that, on their entering the royal city, they shall in every street and corner hear the acclamations of a happy people, and learn with ease the way to the royal palace, made famous to all posterity by the birth of their king and Saviour. But to their great surprise there appears not the least sign of any such solemnity. The court and city go quietly on in seeking their pleasure and profit! and in this unexpected juncture what shall these weary travellers do? Were they governed by human prudence, this disappointment is enough to make them abandon their design, and retreat as privately as they can to screen their reputation, and avoid the raillery of the populace, as well as to prevent the resentment of the most zealous of tyrants, already infamous for blood. But true virtue makes trials the matter and occasion of its most glorious triumphs. Seeming to be forsaken by God, on their being deprived of extraordinary, they have recourse to the ordinary means of information. Steady in the resolution of following the divine call, and fearless of danger, they inquire in the city with equal confidence and humility, and pursue their inquiry in the very court of Herod himself: "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" And does not their conduct teach us, under all difficulties of the spiritual kind, to have recourse to those God has appointed to be our spiritual guides, for their advice and direction? To "obey and be subject to them,"<sup>2</sup> that so God may lead us to himself, as he guided the wise men to Bethlehem by the directions of the priests of the Jewish church.

The whole nation of the Jews, on account of Jacob's and Daniel's prophecies, were then in the highest expectation of the Messiah's appearance among them; the place of whose birth having been also foretold, the wise men, by the interposition of Herod's authority, quickly learned, from the unanimous voice of the Sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews, that Bethlehem was the place which was to be honoured with his birth, as having been pointed out by the prophet Micheas<sup>3</sup> several ages before. How sweet and adorable is the conduct of divine providence! He teaches

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 5.<sup>2</sup> Heb. xlii. 17.<sup>3</sup> Ch. v. 2.

saints his will by the mouths of impious ministers, and furnishes Gentiles with the means of admonishing and confounding the blindness of the Jews. But graces are lost on carnal and hardened souls. Herod had then reigned upwards of thirty years; a monster of cruelty, ambition, craft, and dissimulation; old age and sickness had at that time exasperated his jealous mind in an unusual manner. He dreaded nothing so much as the appearance of the Messiah, whom the generality then expected under the notion of a temporal prince, and whom he could consider in no other light than that of a rival and pretender to his crown; so no wonder that he was startled at the news of his birth. All Jerusalem, likewise, instead of rejoicing at such happy tidings, were alarmed and disturbed together with him. We abhor their baseness; but do not we, at a distance from courts, betray several symptoms of the baneful influence of human respects running counter to our duty? Likewise in Herod we see how extravagantly blind and foolish ambition is. The divine infant came not to deprive Herod of his earthly kingdom, but to offer him one that is eternal; and to teach him a holy contempt of all worldly pomp and grandeur. Again, how senseless and extravagant a folly was it to form designs against those of God himself who confounds the wisdom of the world, baffles the vain projects of men, and laughs their policy to scorn. Are there no Herods nowadays? Persons who are enemies to the spiritual kingdom of Christ in their hearts?

The tyrant, to ward off the blow he seemed threatened with, has recourse to his usual arts of craft and dissimulation. He pretends a no less ardent desire of paying homage to the new-born king, and covers his impious design of taking away his life under the specious pretext of going himself in person to adore him. Wherefore, after particular examination about the time when the wise men first saw this star, and a strict charge to come back and inform him where the child was to be found, he dismissed them to the place determined by the chief priests and scribes. Herod was then near his death; but as a man lives, such does he usually die. The near prospect of eternity seldom operates in so salutary a manner on habitual sinners as to produce in them a true and sincere change of heart.

The wise men readily complied with the voice of the Sanhedrim, notwithstanding the little encouragement these Jewish leaders afford them from their own example to persist in their search; for not one single priest or scribe is disposed to bear them company in seeking after, and paying due homage to, their own king. The truths and maxims of religion depend not on the morals of those that preach them; they spring from a higher source—the wisdom and veracity of God himself. When, therefore, a message comes undoubtedly from God, the misdemeanours of him that immediately conveys it to us can be no just plea or excuse for our failing to comply with it. As, on the other side, an exact and ready compliance will then be a better proof of our faith and confidence in God, and so much the



more recommend us to his special conduct and protection, as it did the wise men. For no sooner had they left Jerusalem, but, to encourage their faith and zeal, and to direct their travels, God was pleased to show them the star again, which they had seen in the East, and which continued to go before them till it conducted them to the very place where they were to see and adore their God and Saviour. Here its ceasing to advance, and probably sinking lower in the air, tells them in its mute language: "Here shall you find the new-born king." The holy men, with an unshaken and steady faith, and in transports of spiritual joy, entered the poor cottage, rendered more glorious by this birth than the most sumptuous stately palace in the universe, and finding the child with his mother, they prostrate themselves, they adore him, they pour forth their souls in his presence in the deepest sentiments of praise, thanksgiving, and a total sacrifice of themselves. So far from being shocked at the poverty of the place, and at his unkingly appearance, their faith rises and gathers strength on the sight of obstacles which, humanly speaking, should extinguish it. It captivates their understanding; it penetrates these curtains of poverty, infancy, weakness, and abjection; it casts them on their faces, as unworthy to look up to this star, this God of Jacob; they confess him under this disguise to be the only and eternal God: they own the excess of his goodness in becoming man, and the excess of human misery which requires for its relief so great a humiliation of the Lord of glory. St Leo thus extols their faith and devotion: "When a star had conducted them to adore Jesus, they did not find him commanding devils, or raising the dead, or restoring sight to the blind, or speech to the dumb, or employed in any divine actions; but a silent babe, under the care of a solicitous mother, giving no sign of power, but exhibiting a miracle of humility."

The Magi, pursuant to the custom of the eastern nations, where the persons of great princes are not to be approached without presents, present to Jesus, as a token of homage, the richest produce their countries afforded, gold, frankincense, and myrrh—gold, as an acknowledgment of his regal power; incense, as a confession of his Godhead; and myrrh, as a testimony that he was become man for the redemption of the world.

The holy kings being about to return home, God, who saw the hypocrisy and malicious designs of Herod, by a particular intimation diverted them from their purpose of carrying back word to Jerusalem where the child was to be found. So, to complete their fidelity and grace, they returned not to Herod's court; but, leaving their hearts with their infant Saviour, took another road back into their own country. In like manner, if we would persevere in the possession of the graces bestowed on us, we must resolve from this day to hold no correspondence with a sinful world, the irreconcilable enemy to Jesus Christ; but to take a way that lies a distance from it, I mean that which is marked out to us by the saving maxims of the gospel.

And pursuing this with an unshaken confidence in his grace and merits, we shall safely arrive at our heavenly country.

It has never been questioned but that the holy Magi spent the rest of their lives in the fervent service of God. The ancient author of the imperfect comment on St Matthew, among the works of St Chrysostom, says they were afterwards baptized in Persia by St Thomas the apostle, and became themselves preachers of the gospel. Their bodies were said to have been translated to Constantinople under the first Christian emperors. From thence they were conveyed to Milan, where the place in which they were deposited is still shown in the Dominicans' church of that city. The emperor Frederick Barbarossa having taken Milan, caused them to be translated to Cologne in Germany, in the twelfth century.

## ST MELANIUS, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

SAINT MELANIUS was a native of Brittany and had served God with great fervour in a monastery for some years when, upon the death of St Amandus, the Bishop of Rennes, he was called by the clergy and people to occupy that see. His virtue was chiefly enhanced by a sincere humility and a spirit of continual prayer. The author of his life tells us that he raised one that was dead to life and performed many other miracles. The almost entire extirpation of idolatry in the diocese of Rennes was the fruit of the zeal of St Melanius. He died in 490 or, as some say, in 530 in a monastery at Placs, the place of his birth, and was buried with great solemnity at Rennes, amidst the lamentations and tears of an immense concourse of people.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 6 :*

THE EPIPHANY AND THE FEAST OF THE THREE KINGS: BLESSED CHARLES OF SEZZE, a Franciscan lay-brother beatified in 1882: ST ERMINOLD, Abbot and martyr, famous for his charity to the poor: BLESSED GERTRUDE VAN DER OOSTEN, virgin, 1358, a Beguine, remarkable as a child for piety. Her surname van Oosten (of the East) was due to her custom of singing a hymn beginning "Day breaketh in the East." Her cultus is a local one, and the cross before which she received the stigmata is exposed on the anniversary of her death, on that Feast of the Kings who came from the East to adore the Infant Christ: ST GUARINUS: BLESSED JOHN DE RIBERA, Archbishop, 1611: ST MELANIUS: ST PETER THOMAS, Carmelite, Bishop, Archbishop, and finally Patriarch of Constantinople, 1366: and ST WILTRUDIS, widow, 986 (?).

JANUARY 7

ST CEDD, BISHOP OF LONDON

(A.D. 664)

HE was brother to St Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, and to St Celin, and Cimberty, apostolic priests, who all laboured zealously in the conversion of the English Saxons, their countrymen. St Cedd long served God in the

monastery of Lindisfarne, founded by St Aidan, and for his great sanctity was promoted to the priesthood. Peada, the son of Penda, King of Mercia, was appointed by his father king of the midland English—by which name Bede distinguishes the inhabitants of Leicestershire and part of Lincolnshire and Derbyshire from the rest of the Mercians. The young king, with a great number of noblemen, servants, and soldiers, went to Atwall, or Walton, the seat of Oswy, king of the Northumbers, and was there baptized with all his attendants, by Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne. Four priests, St Cedd, Adda, Betta, and Diuma, the last a Scot, the rest English, were sent to preach the gospel to his people, the midland English, among whom great multitudes received the word of life with joy. King Penda himself obstructed not these missionaries in preaching the faith in other parts of Mercia, but hated and despised such as embraced the gospel yet lived not up to it, saying, "Such wretches deserve the utmost contempt, who would not obey the God in whom they believed." St Cedd, after labouring there some time with great success, was called from his mission to a new harvest. Sigbercht, or Sigebert, king of the East-Saxons, paying a visit to Oswy, in Northumberland, was persuaded by that prince to forsake his idols, and was baptized by Bishop Finan. When he was returned to his own kingdom, he entreated King Oswy to send him some teachers, who might instruct his people in the faith of Christ. Oswy called St Cedd out of the province of the midland English, and sent him with another priest to the nation of the East-Saxons. When they had travelled over that whole province, and gathered numerous churches to our Lord, St Cedd returned to Lindisfarne to confer with Bishop Finan about certain matters of importance. That prelate ordained him bishop of the East-Saxons, having called two other bishops to assist at his consecration. St Cedd, going back to his province, pursued the work he had begun, built churches, and ordained priests and deacons. Two monasteries were erected by him in those parts, which seem afterwards to have been destroyed by the Danes, and never restored. The first he founded near a city, called by the English Saxons, Ythancester, formerly Othona, seated upon the bank of the River Pante (now Froshwell), which town was afterwards swallowed up by the gradual encroaching of the sea. St Cedd's other monastery was built at another city called Tillaburg, now Tilbury, near the river Thames, and here Camden supposes the saint chiefly to have resided, as the first English bishops often chose to live in monasteries. But others generally imagine that London, then the seat of the king, was the ordinary place of his residence, as it was of the ancient bishops of that province, and of all his successors. In a journey which St Cedd made to his own country, Edilwald, the son of Oswald, who reigned among the Deiri, in Yorkshire, finding him to be a wise and holy man, desired him to accept of

some possessions of land to build a monastery, to which the king might resort to offer his prayers with those who should attend the divine service without intermission, and where he might be buried when he died. The king had before with him a brother of our saint, called Celin, a priest of great piety, who administered the divine word, and the sacraments, to him and his family. St Cedd pitched upon a place amidst craggy and remote mountains, which seemed fitter to be a retreat for robbers, or a lurking place for wild beasts, than a habitation for men. Here he resolved first to spend forty days in fasting and prayer, to consecrate the place to God. This monastery being founded in 658, was called Lestingay. St Cedd placed in it monks, with a superior from Lindisfarne; but continued to superintend the same, and afterwards made several visits thither from London. Our saint excommunicated a certain nobleman among the East-Saxons for an incestuous marriage; forbidding any Christian to enter his house, or eat with him. Notwithstanding this prohibition, the king went to a banquet at his house. Upon his return, the holy bishop met him, whom, as soon as the king saw, he began to tremble, and, lighting from his horse, prostrated himself at his feet, begging pardon for his offence. The bishop touched him with the rod which he held in his hand, and said, "O king, because thou wouldst not refrain from the house of that wicked excommunicated person, thou thyself shalt die in that very house." Accordingly, some time after, the king was basely murdered, in 661, by this nobleman and another, both his own kinsmen, who alleged no other reason for their crime than that he was too easy in forgiving his enemies. This king was succeeded by Suidhelm, the son of Sexbald, whom St Cedd regenerated to Christ by baptism. In 664, St Cedd was present at the conference, or synod, of Streneshalch, in which he forsook the Scottish custom, and agreed to receive the canonical observance of the time of Easter. Soon after, a great pestilence breaking out in England, St Cedd died of it, in his beloved monastery of Lestingay, in the mountainous part of Yorkshire, since destroyed by the Danes, so that its exact situation is not known. He was first buried in the open cemetery, but, not long after, a church of stone being built in the same monastery, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, the mother of our Lord, his body was removed, and laid at the right hand of the altar. Thirty of the saint's religious brethren in Essex, upon the news of his death, came to Lestingay, in the resolution to live and die where their holy father had ended his life. They were willingly received by their brethren, but were all carried off by the same pestilence, except a little boy, who was afterwards found not to have been then baptized, and being in process of time advanced to the priesthood, lived to gain many souls to God. St Cedd died on the 26th of October, but is commemorated in the English Martyrology on

the 7th of January. See Bede, Hist. lib. iii. c. 21, 22, 23. Wharton, Hist. Episc. Lond., &c.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 7 :*

ST ALDRIC, Bishop of Le Mans, born 800, died 856. He lived at the Court of Charlemagne in his youth and later was confessor to his son Louis. Aldric took part in the Councils of Paris and Tours, and was a bishop for twenty-four years: ST CEDD: ST CANUTE, king and martyr: ST KENTIGERNA, widow: ST LUCIAN, priest and martyr, 312, who, after being racked for his loyalty to the faith after nine years in prison, finished his glorious course by the sword, at Nicomedia: ST REINOLD, martyr: ST TILLO, Confessor, eighth century: ST VALENTINUS, Bishop: BL. VITALIS, Abbot of Savigny, which monastery he founded, chaplain to Robert of Mortain, brother of William the Conqueror. He gave up his canonry in 1095 and became one of the leaders of the hermit colony in the Forest of Craon, gathering the outcasts of the place about him. A fearless and outspoken preacher: BL. EDWARD WATERSON, English martyr, 1593: and BL. WITTIKUND, Confessor, Duke of Westphalia, 804.

## JANUARY 8

### ST APOLLINARIS, THE APOLOGIST, BISHOP

(A.D. 175)

[From Eusebius, Theodoret, St Jerom, &c. See Tillemont, Mem. t. ii. p. 492, and Hist. des Emp. t. ii. p. 369.]

CLAUDIUS APOLLINARIS, Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, was one of the most illustrious prelates of the second age. Notwithstanding the great encomiums bestowed on him by Eusebius, St Jerom, Theodoret, and others, we know but very little of his actions; and his writings, which then were held in great esteem, seem now to be all lost. But nothing rendered his name so illustrious as his noble apology for the Christian religion, which he addressed to the emperor Marcus Aurelius about the year 175, soon after the miraculous victory that prince had obtained over the Quadi by the prayers of the Christians, of which the saint made mention.

Marcus Aurelius having long attempted, without success, to subdue the Germans by his generals, resolved in the thirteenth year of his reign, and of Christ 171, to lead a powerful army against them. He was beyond the Danube, for Germany was extended much further eastward than it is at present, when the Quadi, a people inhabiting that tract now called Moravia, surrounded him in a very disadvantageous situation; so that there was no possibility that either he or his army could escape out of their hands, or subsist long where they were for want of water. The twelfth legion, called the Melitine, from a town of that name in Armenia, where it had been quartered a long time, was chiefly composed of Christians. These, when the army was drawn up, but languid and perishing with thirst, fell upon their knees, "as we are accustomed to do at prayer," says Eusebius, and poured forth earnest supplications to God in this public extremity of their state and emperor, though hitherto he had been a persecutor of their religion. The strangeness of the sight surprised the enemies, who had more reason to be astonished at the event; for all on a sudden the sky was

darkened with clouds, and a thick rain showered down with impetuosity just as the Barbarians had assailed the Roman camp. The Romans fought and drank at the same time, catching the rain, as it fell, in their helmets, and often swallowing it mingled with blood. Though by this means exceedingly refreshed, the Germans were much too strong for them; but the storm being driven by a violent wind upon their faces, and accompanied with dreadful flashes of lightning and loud thunder, the Germans were deprived of their sight, beaten down to the ground, and terrified to such a degree, that they were entirely routed and put to flight. Both heathen and Christian writers give this account of the victory. The heathens ascribe it, some to the power of magic, others to their gods, as Dio Cassius;<sup>1</sup> but the Christians unanimously recount it as a miracle obtained by the prayers of this legion, as St Apollinaris in his apology to this very emperor; who adds, that as an acknowledgment, the emperor immediately gave it the name of the *Thundering Legion*, and from him it is so called by Eusebius,<sup>2</sup> Tertullian,<sup>3</sup> St Jerom,<sup>4</sup> and St Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>5</sup>

The Quadi and Sarmatians brought back thirteen thousand prisoners, whom they had taken, and begged for peace on whatever conditions it should please the emperor to grant it them. Marcus Aurelius hereupon took the title of the *seventh-time emperor*, contrary to custom, and without the consent of the senate, regarding it as given him by heaven. Out of gratitude to his Christian soldiers he published an edict, in which he confessed himself indebted for his delivery *to the shower obtained, PERHAPS, by the prayers of the Christians*, and more he could not say without danger of exasperating the pagans. In it he forbade, under pain of death, any one to accuse a Christian on account of his religion; yet by a strange inconsistency, especially in so wise a prince, being overawed by the opposition of the senate, he had not the courage to abolish the laws already made and in force against Christians. Hence, even after this, in the same reign, many suffered martyrdom, though their accusers were also put to death; as in the case of St Apollonius and of the martyrs of Lyons. Trajan had in like manner forbid Christians to be accused, yet commanded them to be punished with death if accused, as may be seen declared by him in his famous letter to *Pliny the Younger*; the glaring injustice of which law Tertullian demonstrates by an unanswerable dilemma.

St Apollinaris, who could not see his flock torn in pieces and be silent, penned his apology to the emperor, about the year 172, to remind him of the benefit he had received from God by the prayers of the Christians, and to implore his protection. We have no account of the time of this holy man's death, which probably happened before that of Marcus Aurelius. The Roman Martyrology mentions him on the 8th of January.

<sup>1</sup> B. lxxi.  
<sup>4</sup> Chron.

<sup>2</sup> Hist. b. v. c. 5.  
<sup>5</sup> Or 2, de 40 mart.

<sup>3</sup> Apol. c. 5, L. ad Scap. c. 4.

We believe the same great truths and divine mysteries, we profess the same faith which produced such wonderful fruits in the souls of the saints. Whence comes it that it has not the like effect in us? That though we acknowledge virtue to be the richest treasure of the soul of man, we take little pains about it; passionately seek the things of this world, are cast down and broken under every adversity, and curb and restrain our passions only by halves? That the most glorious objects, God and heaven, and the amazing and dreadful truths, a judgment to come, hell and eternity, strike us so feebly, and operate so little in us? The reason is plain, because we meditate not sufficiently on these great truths. It is not enough barely to believe them, and let our thoughts now and then glance upon them; that knowledge which shows us heaven will not bring us to the possession of it, and will deserve punishments, not rewards, if it remains slight, weak, and superficial. By serious and frequent meditation it must be concocted, digested, and turned into the nourishment of our affections before it can be powerful and operative enough to change them, and produce the necessary fruit in our lives. For this all the saints affected solitude and retreats from the noise and hurry of the world, as much as their circumstances allowed them.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 8 :*

ST ALBERT, Archbishop (?) of Cashel in the eighth century, and principal patron of that diocese : ST APOLLINARIS the Apologist : ST ATTICUS, Bishop of Constantinople : ST BALDWIN, martyr about the year 670 : ST ERHARD, Bishop late in the seventh century : ST FRODOBERTUS or Frobert, Abbot of Troyes : ST GARIBALDUS, Bishop of Ratisbon, about 762 : ST GUDULE, virgin, Patroness of Brussels : ST LUCIAN, martyr : ST PATIENS, Bishop of Metz : ST PEGA, virgin, early in the eighth century : the two SAINTS SEVERNUS, one Abbot, apostle in Austria (fifth century), and the other Bishop of Septempeda (sixth century) : and ST WULSIN or Vulsin, Bishop of Sherborne, 1005.

## JANUARY 9

### ST PETER OF SEBASTE, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

(About the year 387)

[From the life of his sister St Macrina, composed by their brother St Gregory of Nyssa ; and from St Gregory Naz. Or. 20. See also Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. lib. iv. c. 30. Rufin. lib. ii. c. 9, and the judicious compilation of Tillemont, in his life of St Gregory of Nyssa, art. 6, t. ix. p. 572.]

THE family of which St Peter descended was very ancient and illustrious; St Gregory Nazianzen tells us that his pedigree was made up of a list of celebrated heroes; but their names are long since buried in oblivion, whilst those of the saints which it gave to the church, and who despised the world and its honours, are immortal in the records of the church, and are written in the book of life; for the light of faith, and the grace of the Almighty, extinguishing in their breasts the sparks of worldly ambition, inspired them with a most vehement ardour to attain the perfection of Christian virtue, and changed their family into a house of saints; three brothers were at the same time eminently holy bishops—St Basil,

St Gregory of Nyssa, and St Peter of Sebaste; and their eldest sister, St Macrina, was the spiritual mother of many saints and excellent doctors. Their father and mother, St Basil the elder, and St Emelia, were banished for their faith in the reign of the Emperor Galerius Maximian, and fled into the deserts of Pontus; they are recorded together in the Roman Martyrology on the 30th of May: the grandmother of our pious and fruitful family of saints was the celebrated St Macrina the Elder, who was instructed in the science of salvation by St Gregory Thaumaturgus. St Peter of Sebaste was the youngest of ten children, and lost his father in his cradle, some think before he was born; and his eldest sister, Macrina, took care of his education, in which it was her only aim to instruct him in the maxims of religion, and form him to perfect piety; profane studies she thought of little use to one who designed to make salvation the sole end of all his inquiries and pursuits, nor did he ever make them any part of his employment, confining his views to a monastic state. His mother had founded two monasteries, one for men, the other for women; the former she put under the direction of her son Basil, the latter under that of her daughter Macrina. Peter, whose thoughts were wholly bent on cultivating the seeds of piety that had been sown in him, retired into the house governed by his brother, situated on the bank of the River Iris; when St Basil was obliged to quit that post, in 362, he left the abbacy in the hands of St Peter, who discharged this office for several years with great prudence and virtue. When the provinces of Pontus and Cappadocia were visited by a severe famine, he gave a remarkable proof of his charity; human prudence would have advised him to be frugal in the relief of others till his own family should be secured against that calamity; but Peter had studied the principles of christian charity in another school, and liberally disposed of all that belonged to his monastery, and whatever he could raise, to supply with necessaries the numerous crowds that daily resorted to him, in that time of distress. Soon after St Basil was made Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in 370, he promoted his brother Peter to the priesthood; the holy abbot looked on the holy orders he had received as a fresh engagement to perfection. His brother St Basil died on the 1st of January, in 379, and his sister Macrina in November the same year. Eustathius, Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, a violent Arian, and a furious persecutor of St Basil, seems to have died soon after them; for St Peter was consecrated Bishop of Sebaste, in 380, to-root out the Arian heresy in that diocese, where it had taken deep root; the zeal of a saint was necessary, nor can we doubt but God placed our saint in that dignity for this purpose. A letter which St Peter wrote, and which is prefixed to St Gregory of Nyssa's books against Eunomius, has entitled him to a rank among the ecclesiastical writers, and is a standing proof that, though he had confined himself to sacred studies, yet by good conversation and reading,



and by dint of genius and an excellent understanding, he was inferior to none but his incomparable brother Basil, and his colleague Nazianzen, in solid eloquence. In 381, he attended the general council held at Constantinople, and joined the other bishops in condemning the Macedonian heretics. Not only his brother St Gregory, but also Theodoret, and all antiquity, bear testimony to his extraordinary sanctity, prudence, and zeal. His death happened in summer, about the year 387, and his brother of Nyssa mentions that his memory was honoured at Sebaste (probably the very year after his death) by an anniversary solemnity, with several martyrs of that city.<sup>1</sup> His name occurs in the Roman Martyrology, on the 9th of January.

We admire to see a whole family of saints. This prodigy of grace, under God, was owing to the example, prayers, and exhortations of the elder St Macrina, which had this wonderful influence and effect; from her they learned most heartily and deeply to imbibe the true spirit of self-denial and humility, which all Christians confess to be the fundamental maxim of the gospel; but this they generally acknowledge in speculation only, whereas it is in the heart that this foundation is to be laid. We must entertain no attachment, says St Gregory of Nyssa,<sup>2</sup> to anything, especially where there is most danger of passion, by some sensual pleasure annexed; and we must begin by being upon our guard against sensuality in eating, which is the most ancient enemy, and the father of vice: we must observe in our whole life the most exact rule of temperance, never making the pleasure of sense our end, but only the necessity of the use we make of things, even those in which a pleasure is taken. In another treatise he says,<sup>3</sup> he who despises the world must also renounce himself, so as never to follow his own will, but purely to seek in all things the will of God; we are his in justice, his will must be the law and rule of our whole life. This precept of dying to ourselves, that Christ may live in us, and all our affections and actions governed by his spirit, is excellently inculcated by St Basil the Great.<sup>4</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 9 :*

ST ADRIAN, Abbot, of Canterbury, Confessor, an African by birth, appointed by Pope Vitalian to succeed St Deusdedit. He laboured for thirty-nine years in England, founding many schools; died 9th January 710 : ST BRIHTWALD, Archbishop of Canterbury in the eighth century : ST FELAN, Abbot : BLESSED HONORIUS, martyr, 1250 (?) : PAULINE MARIE JARICOT, who founded the Association for the Propagation of the Faith (in her childhood "self-willed and vain," but also "very lovable") : SAINTS JULIAN and BASILISSA, a devout couple said to have been forced to marry by the parents of Julian; they agreed to preserve their virginity; died at Antioch early in the fourth century, martyrdom being reserved for Julian, while his wife died a holy death : ST MARCIANA, virgin and martyr in the second century : ST PASCHASIA, virgin and martyr about 178 : ST PETER OF SEBASTE : and ST WANINGUS or Vaneng, 683.

<sup>1</sup> St Gr. Nyss. ep. ad Flav. t. iii. p. 645.

<sup>2</sup> Id. de perfectâ Christi formâ.

<sup>3</sup> St Gr. Nyss. de Virg. c. 9.

<sup>4</sup> St Basil, in Ps. 34, de Bapt. lib. i. et Interr. 337.

JANUARY 10

## ST WILLIAM, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF BOURGES

(A.D. 1209)

[From his life written by a faithful acquaintance at Bourges (abridged by Surius), and again by Peter, a monk of Chaalis, both soon after his death: collected by Dom le Nain, in his history of the Cistercians, t. vii. See also the notes of Bollandus, with a fragment of a third life, and Gallia Christ. Nov. t. ii. p. 63.]

WILLIAM BERRUYER, of the illustrious family of the ancient counts of Nevers, was educated by Peter the hermit, Archdeacon of Soissons, his uncle by the mother's side. He learned from his infancy to despise the folly and emptiness of the riches and grandeur of the world, to abhor its pleasures, and to tremble at its dangers. His only delight was in exercises of piety and in his studies, in which he employed his whole time with indefatigable application. He was made canon, first of Soissons, and afterwards of Paris: but he soon took the resolution of abandoning all commerce with the world; and retired into the solitude of Grandmont, where he lived with great regularity in that austere order, till seeing its peace disturbed by a contest which arose between the fathers and lay-brothers, he passed into the Cistercian, then in wonderful odour of sanctity. He took the habit in the abbey of Pontigny, and shining as a perfect model of monastic perfection, was after some time chosen prior of that house, and afterwards abbot, first of Fontaine-Jean, in the diocese of Sens (a filiation of Pontigny, founded in 1124, by Peter de Courtenay, son of King Lewis the Fat), and some time after, of Chaalis, near Senlis, a much more numerous monastery, also a filiation of Pontigny, built by Lewis the Fat, in 1136, a little before his death. St William always reputed himself the last among his brethren. The universal mortification of his senses and passions laid in him the foundation of an admirable purity of heart and an extraordinary gift of prayer; in which he received great heavenly lights, and tasted of the sweets which God had reserved for those to whom he is pleased to communicate himself. The sweetness and cheerfulness of his countenance testified the uninterrupted joy and peace that overflowed his soul, and made virtue appear with the most engaging charms in the midst of austerities.

On the death of Henry de Sully, Archbishop of Bourges, the clergy of that church requested his brother Eudo, Bishop of Paris, to come and assist them in the election of a pastor. Desirous to choose some abbot of the Cistercian order, then renowned for holy men, they put on the altar the names of three, written on as many billets. This manner of election by lots would have been superstitious, and a tempting of God, had it been done, relying on a miracle, without the warrant of divine inspiration. But it deserved not this censure when all the persons proposed seemed equally

worthy and fit, as the choice was only recommended to God, and left to this issue by following the rules of his ordinary providence, and imploring his light, without rashness, or a neglect of the usual means of scrutiny: prudence might sometimes even recommend such a method, in order to terminate a debate when the candidates seemed equally qualified. God, in such cases, is said sometimes to have miraculously interposed.

Eudo, accordingly, having written three billets, laid them on the altar; and having made his prayer, drew first the name of the abbot William, on whom, at the same time, the majority of the votes of the clergy had made the election fall, the 23rd of November, 1200. This news overwhelmed William with grief. He never would have acquiesced had he not received a double command in virtue of obedience from the pope, and from his general the Abbot of Citeaux. He left his dear solitude with many tears, and was received at Bourges as one sent by heaven, and soon after was consecrated. In this new dignity his first care was to conform both his exterior and interior to the most perfect rules of sanctity; being very sensible that a man's first task is to honour God perfectly in his own soul. He redoubled all his austerities, saying it was now incumbent on him to do penance for others as well as for himself. He always wore a hair-shirt under his religious habit, and never added, nor diminished, anything in his clothes either winter or summer. He never ate any flesh-meat, though he had it at his table for strangers. His attention to feed his flock was no less remarkable, especially in assisting the poor both spiritually and corporally, saying that he was chiefly sent for them. He was most mild to penitent sinners; but inflexible towards the impenitent, though he refused to have recourse to the civil power against them, the usual remedy of that age. Many such he at last reclaimed by his sweetness and charity. Certain great men abusing his lenity, usurped the rights of his church; but the saint strenuously defended them even against the king himself, notwithstanding his threats to confiscate his lands. By humility and resolution he overcame several contradictions of his chapter and other clergy. By his zeal he converted many of the Albigenses, contemporary heretics, and was preparing himself for a mission among them at the time he was seized with his last illness. He would, notwithstanding, preach a farewell sermon to his people, which increased his fever to such a degree that he was obliged to set aside his journey and take to his bed. Drawing near his end, he received first extreme unction, according to the discipline of that age;<sup>1</sup> then, in order to receive the viaticum, he rose out of bed, fell on his knees melting in tears, and prayed long prostrate with his arms stretched out in the form of a cross. The night following, perceiving his last hour approach, he desired to anticipate the nocturns, which are said at midnight: but having made the sign of the cross on his lips and breast, was able to

<sup>1</sup> See Bellarmin, de Arte moriendi Iuenin, de Sacrem. t. ii. et Hist. des Sacr. t. vii.

pronounce no more than the two first words. Then, according to a sign made by him, he was laid on ashes in the hair-cloth which he always privately wore. In this posture he soon after expired, a little past midnight, on the morning of the 10th of January, in 1209. His body was interred in his cathedral; and being honoured by many miracles, was taken up in 1217; and in the year following he was canonized by Pope Honorius III. His relics were kept with great veneration till 1562, when they were burnt, and scattered in the winds by the Huguenots, on occasion of their plundering the cathedral of Bourges, as Baillet and Bollandus mention. A bone of his arm is shown with veneration at Chaalis, whither it had been sent soon after the saint's body was taken up: and a rib is preserved in the church of the college of Navarre, at Paris, on which the canons of St Bourges bestowed it in 1399.<sup>1</sup> His festival is kept in that church with great solemnity, and a great concourse of devout persons; St William being regarded in several parts of France as one of the patrons of the nation, though his name is not mentioned in the Roman Martyrology. The celebrated Countess Maud, his niece, out of veneration for his memory, bestowed certain lands in the Nivernois on the church of Bourges.<sup>2</sup> B. Philip Berruyer, a nephew of St William, was Archbishop of Bourges from the year 1236 to 1260, in which he died in the odour of sanctity. Nangi ascribes to him many miracles, and other historians bear testimony to his eminent virtue.<sup>3</sup> Dom Martenne has published his edifying original life.<sup>4</sup>

If we look into the lives of all the saints, we shall find that it was by a spirit and gift of prayer that the Holy Ghost formed in their hearts the most perfect sentiments of all virtues. It is this which enlightens the understanding, and infuses a spiritual knowledge, and a heavenly wisdom, which is incomparably more excellent than that in which philosophers pride themselves. The same purifies the affections, sanctifies the soul, adorns it with virtues, and enriches it with every gift of heaven. Holy pastors have always made retirement and a life of prayer their apprenticeship or preparation for the ministry, and afterwards, amidst its functions were still men of prayer in them, having God always present to their mind, and setting apart intervals in the day, and a considerable part of the nights, to apply themselves with their whole attention to this exercise, in the silence of all creatures.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 10 :*

ST AGATHO, Pope, surnamed the Wonderworker; he was originally a Benedictine in Palermo and was over one hundred years old when he succeeded Pope Domnus. He died in Rome, 681 : ST JOHN CAMILLUS BONUS, Confessor in the seventh century, Bishop of Milan : BLESSED GREGORY X, Pope, 1210-1276, who succeeded to the Papacy after the Holy See had been vacant almost three years. He sought during his pontificate to promote the interests of the Holy Land : ST MARCIAN, priest and Confessor in the fifth century : ST PETER URSEOLUS or ORSEOLO, Confessor, 987 : ST SETHRIDA or SETHRYTH, virgin, about 660 : BLESSED VINCENT STRAMBI, Bishop of Tolentino, Confessor, 1824 : and ST WILLIAM, Archbishop of Bourges.

<sup>1</sup> See Chatelain, Not. p. 161, Brev. Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Gallia Christ. Nov. t. ii. p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Martenne, Anecd. t. iii. p. 1927.

JANUARY 11

## ST THEODOSIUS, THE CENOBIARCH

(A.D. 529)

[From his life by Theodorus, Bishop of Petra, some time his disciple, in Surius and Bollandus, and commended by Fleury, Baillet, &c.]

ST THEODOSIUS was born at Mogariassus, called in latter ages Marissa, in Cappadocia, in 423. He imbibed the first tincture of virtue from the fervent example and pious instructions of his virtuous parents. He was ordained reader, but some time after being moved by Abraham's example to quit his country and friends, he resolved to put this motion in execution. He accordingly set out for Jerusalem, but went purposely out of his road to visit the famous St Simeon Stylites on his pillar, who foretold him several circumstances of his life, and gave him proper instructions for his behaviour in each. Having satisfied his devotion in visiting the holy places in Jerusalem, he began to consider in what manner he should dedicate himself to God in a religious state. The dangers of living without a guide made him prefer a monastery to a hermitage; and he therefore put himself under the directions of a holy man named Longinus, to whom his virtue soon endeared him in a very particular manner. A pious lady having built a church under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, on the high road to Bethlehem, Longinus could not well refuse her request that his pupil should undertake the charge of it; but Theodosius, who loved only to obey, could not be induced by any entreaties to consent to this proposal: absolute commands were necessary to force him to a compliance. Nor did he govern long; for dreading the poison of vanity from the esteem of men, he retired into a cave at the top of a neighbouring desert mountain, and employed his time in fasting, watching, prayers, and tears, which almost continually flowed from his eyes. His food was coarse pulse and wild herbs: for thirty years he never tasted so much as a morsel of bread. Many desired to serve God under his direction: he at first determined only to admit six or seven, but was soon obliged to receive a greater number, and at length came to a resolution, which charity extorted from him, never to reject any that presented themselves with dispositions that seemed sincere. The first lesson which he taught his monks was that the continual remembrance of death is the foundation of religious perfection; to imprint this more deeply in their minds, he caused a great grave or pit to be dug, which might serve for the common burial-place of the whole community, that by the presence of this memorial of death, and by continually meditating on that object, they might more perfectly learn to die daily. The burial-place being made, the abbot one day, when he had led his monks to it, said, "The grave is made, who will first perform the dedication?" Basil, a

priest, who was one of the number, falling on his knees, said to St Theodosius, "I am the person, be pleased to give me your blessing." The abbot ordered the prayers of the church for the dead to be offered up for him, and on the fortieth day Basil wonderfully departed to our Lord in peace without any apparent sickness. When the holy company of disciples were twelve in number it happened that at the great feast at Easter they had nothing to eat; they had not even bread for the sacrifice: some murmured; the saint bid them trust in God and he would provide; which was soon remarkably verified by the arrival of certain mules loaded with provisions. The lustre of the sanctity and miracles of St Theodosius drawing great numbers to him who desired to serve God under his direction, his cave was too little for their reception, therefore, having consulted heaven by prayer, he, by its particular direction, built a spacious monastery at a place called Cathismus, not far from Bethlehem, at a small distance from his cave, and it was soon filled with holy monks. To this monastery were annexed three infirmaries: one for the sick, the gift of a pious lady in that neighbourhood; the two others St Theodosius built himself, one for the aged and feeble, the other for such as had been punished with the loss of their senses, or by falling under the power of the devil, for rashly engaging in a religious state through pride, and without a due dependence on the grace of God to carry them through it. All succours, spiritual and temporal, were afforded in these infirmaries, with admirable order, care, and affection. He erected also several buildings for the reception of strangers, in which he exercised an unbounded hospitality, entertaining all that came, for whose use there were one day above a hundred tables served with provisions: these, when insufficient for the number of guests, were more than once miraculously multiplied by his prayers. The monastery itself was like a city of saints in the midst of a desert, and in it reigned regularity, silence, charity, and peace. There were four churches belonging to it, one for each of the three several nations of which his community was chiefly composed, each speaking a different language; the fourth was for the use of such as were in a state of penance, which those that recovered from their lunatic or possessed condition before-mentioned, were put into, and detained till they had expiated their fault. The nations into which his community was divided were the Greeks, which was by far the most numerous, and consisted of all those that came from any provinces of the empire; the Armenians, with whom were joined the Arabians and Persians; and, thirdly, the Bessi, who comprehended all the northern nations below Thrace, or all who used the Runic or Sclavonian tongue. Each nation sung the first part of the mass to the end of the gospel in their own church, but after the gospel all met in the church of the Greeks, where they celebrated the essential part of the sacrifice in Greek, and communicated all together.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Le Brun, *Explic. des Cérémonies de la Messe*, t. iv. pp. 234, 235, dissert. 14, art. 2.

The monks passed a considerable part of the day and night at their devotions in the church, and at the times not set apart for public prayer and necessary rest every one was obliged to apply himself to some trade or manual labour, not incompatible with recollection that the house might be supplied with conveniences. Sallust, Bishop of Jerusalem, appointed St Sabas superior general of the hermits and our saint of the Cenobites, or religious men living in community throughout all Palestine, whence he was styled the Cenobiarch. These two great servants of God lived in strict friendship, and had frequent spiritual conferences together; they were also united in their zeal and sufferings for the church.

The Emperor Anastasius patronised the Eutychian heresy, and used all possible means to engage our saint in his party. In 513 he deposed Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem, as he had banished Flavian II, Patriarch of Antioch, and intruded Severus, an impious heretic, into that see, commanding the Syrians to obey and hold communion with him. SS. Theodosius and Sabas maintained boldly the right of Elias, and of John his successor; whereupon the imperial officers thought it most advisable to connive at their proceedings, considering the great authority they had acquired by their sanctity. Soon after, the emperor sent Theodosius a considerable sum of money, for charitable uses in appearance, but in reality to engage him in his interest. The saint accepted of it, and distributed it all among the poor. Anastasius, now persuading himself that he was as good as gained over to his cause, sent him a heretical profession of faith, in which the divine and human natures in Christ were confounded into one, and desired him to sign it. The saint wrote him an answer full of apostolic spirit; in which, besides solidly confuting the Eutychian error, he added that he was ready to lay down his life for the faith of the church. The emperor admired his courage and the strength of his reasoning, and, returning him a respectful answer, highly commended his generous zeal, made some apology for his own inconsiderateness, and protested that he only desired the peace of the church. But it was not long ere he relapsed into his former impiety, and renewed his bloody edicts against the orthodox, dispatching troops everywhere to have them put in execution. On the first intelligence of this, Theodosius went over all the deserts and country of Palestine, exhorting every one to be firm in the faith of the four general councils. At Jerusalem, having assembled the people together, he from the pulpit cried out with a loud voice: "If any one receives not the four general councils as the four gospels, let him be anathema." So bold an action in a man of his years inspired with courage those whom the edicts had terrified. His discourses had a wonderful effect on the people, and God gave a sanction to his zeal by miracles: one of these was, that on his going out of the church at Jerusalem, a woman was healed of a cancer on the spot by only touching his garments. The emperor sent an order

for his banishment, which was executed; but, dying soon after, Theodosius was recalled by his catholic successor, Justin, who, from a common soldier, had gradually ascended the imperial throne.

Our saint survived his return eleven years, never admitting the least relaxation in his former austerities. Such was his humility that, seeing two monks at variance with each other, he threw himself at their feet, and would not rise till they were perfectly reconciled; and once having excommunicated one of his subjects for a crime, who contumaciously pretended to excommunicate him in his turn, the saint behaved as if he had been really excommunicated, to gain the sinner's soul by this unprecedented example of submission, which had the desired effect. During the last year of his life he was afflicted with a painful distemper, in which he gave proof of a heroic patience, and an entire submission to the will of God. Perceiving the hour of his dissolution at hand, he gave his last exhortations to his disciples, and foretold many things, which accordingly came to pass after his death; this happened in the one hundred and fifth year of his age, and of our Lord 529. Peter, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the whole country, assisted with the deepest sentiments of respect at the solemnity of his interment, which was honoured by miracles. He was buried in his first cell called the Cave of the Magi, because the wise men who came to adore Christ soon after his birth were said to have lodged in it. A certain count being on his march against the Persians, begged the hair shirt which the saint used to wear next his skin, and believed that he owed the victory which he obtained over them to the saint's protection through the pledge of that relic. Both the Romans and Greek calendars mention his festival on the 11th of January.

It is the opinion of St Gregory the Great that the world is to some persons so full of ambushes and snares, or dangerous occasions of sin, that they cannot be saved but by choosing a safe retreat. Yet there are some who find the greatest dangers in solitude itself; so that it is necessary for every one to sound his own heart, take a survey of his own forces and abilities, and consult God, that he may best be able to learn the designs of his providence with regard to his soul; in doing which, a great purity of intention is the first requisite. Ease and enjoyment must not be the end of Christian retirement, but penance, labour, and assiduous contemplation; without great fervour and constancy in which, close solitude is the road to perdition. If greater safety, or an unfitness for a public station, or a life of much business (in which several are only public nuisances), may be just motives to some for embracing a life of retirement, the means of more easily attaining to perfect virtue may be such to many. Nor do true contemplatives bury their talents, or cease either to be members of the republic of mankind, or to throw in their mite towards its welfare.



From the prayers and thanksgivings which they daily offer to God for the peace of the world, the preservation of the church, the conversion of sinners, and the salvation of all men, doubtless more valuable benefits often accrue to mankind than from the alms of the rich or the labours of the learned. Nor is it to be imagined how far and how powerfully their spirit, and the example of their innocence and perfect virtue, often spread their influence; and how serviceable persons who lead a holy and sequestered life may be to the good of the world; nor how great glory redounds to God by the perfect purity of heart and charity to which many souls are thus raised.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 11 :*

ST EGWIN, third Bishop of Worcester, Confessor, died December 30, 717, founder of the great Abbey of Evesham; a rigid enforcer of ecclesiastical discipline : ST HYGINUS, Pope for four years (about 138-142); a Greek by birth, he established the order of ecclesiastical precedence. Buried on the Vatican Hill near the tomb of St Peter : ST LÆCIUS, Bishop of Brindisi, Confessor : ST PALÆMON, hermit : ST SALVIUS or Sauve, Bishop of Amiens, 625 : ST THEODOSIUS, the Cenobiarch : ST VITALIS, Monk of Gaza, who late in life began his mission of reclaiming fallen women : and the VENERABLE WILLIAM CARTER, a printer, whose father apprenticed him to John Cawood, printer to Queen Elizabeth. On the rack, he would not answer save by ejaculatory prayers, as to the names of those who patronised his press. Martyred on this date at Tyburn, 1584.

## JANUARY 12

### ST BENEDICT BISCOP, COMMONLY CALLED BENNET

HE was nobly descended, and one of the great officers of the court of Oswi, the religious king of the Northumbbers: he was very dear to his prince, and was beholden to his bounty for many fair estates and great honours; but neither the favours of so good and gracious a king, nor the allurements of power, riches, and pleasures, were of force to captivate his heart, who could see nothing in them but dangers, and snares so much the more to be dreaded, as fraught with the power of charming. At the age therefore of twenty-five, an age that affords the greatest relish for pleasure, he bid adieu to the world, made a journey of devotion to Rome, and at his return devoted himself wholly to the studies of the scriptures and other holy exercises. Some time after his return to England, Alcfrid, son of King Oswi, being desirous to make a pilgrimage to the shrines of the apostles, engaged Biscop to bear him company to Rome. The king prevented his son's journey; nevertheless our saint travelled thither a second time, burning with an earnest desire of improving himself in the knowledge of divine things, and in the love of God. From Rome he went to the great monastery of Lerins, then renowned for its regular discipline; there he took the monastic habit, and spent two years in the most exact observance of the rule, and penetrated in every exercise with its true spirit; after this he returned to Rome, where he received an order of Pope Vitalian to accompany St Theodorus, Archbishop of Canterbury, and St Adrian,

to England. When he arrived at Canterbury, St Theodorus committed to him the care of the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul, near that city, which abbacy he resigned to St Adrian upon his arrival in England. St Bennet stayed about two years in Kent, giving himself up to religious exercises and sacred studies, under the discipline of those two excellent persons. Then he took a fourth journey to Rome, with a view of perfecting himself in ecclesiastical discipline, and the rules and practice of a monastic life; for which purpose he made a considerable stay at Rome and other places; he brought home with him a choice library, relics and pictures of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and other saints. When he returned to Northumberland, King Egfrid (in whose father's court St Bennet had formerly lived) bestowed on him seventy ploughs or families of land for building a monastery: this the saint founded on the mouth of the river Were, whence it was called Weremouth. When the monastery was built, St Bennet went over to France, and brought back with him skilful masons, who built the church for this monastery of stone, and after the Roman fashion; for till that time stone buildings were very rare in Britain, even the church of Lindisfarne was of wood, and covered over with a thatch of straw and reeds, till Bishop Eadbert procured both the roof and the walls to be covered with sheets of lead, as Bede mentions.<sup>1</sup> St Bennet also brought over glaziers from France, for the art of making glass was then unknown in Britain. In a fifth journey to Rome, St Bennet furnished himself with a larger stock of good books, especially the writings of the fathers, also of relics and holy pictures, with which he enriched his own country.

His first monastery of Weremouth was entitled from St Peter, prince of the apostles; and such was the edification which it gave that the same king added to the saint a second donation of lands, consisting of forty ploughs; on which Biscop built another monastery, at a place called Girwy, now Jarrow, on the Tyne, six miles distance from the former, and this latter was called St Paul's; these two monasteries were almost looked upon as one; and St Bennet governed them both, though he placed in each a superior or abbot, who continued subject to him, his long journey to Rome and other avocations making this substitution necessary. In the church of St Peter at Weremouth he placed the pictures of the Blessed Virgin, the twelve apostles, the history of the gospel, and the visions in the revelation of St John: that of St Paul's at Jarrow he adorned with other pictures, disposed in such manner as to represent the harmony between the Old and New Testament, and the conformity of the figures in one to the reality in the other. Thus Isaac carrying the wood which was to be employed in the sacrifice of himself was explained by Jesus Christ carrying his cross, on which he was to finish his sacrifice; and the brazen serpent was illustrated by our Saviour's crucifixion. With these

<sup>1</sup> Hist. lib. iii. c. 25.

pictures, and many books and relics, St Bennet brought from Rome in his last voyage, John, Abbot of St Martin's, precentor in St Peter's church, whom he prevailed with Pope Agatho to send with him, and whom he placed at Weremouth to instruct perfectly his monks in the Gregorian notes, and Roman ceremonies for singing the divine office. Easterwin, a kinsman of St Bennet, and formerly an officer in the king's court before he became a monk, was chosen abbot before our saint set out for Rome, and in that station behaved always as the meanest person in the house; for though he was eminently adorned with all virtues, humility, mildness, and devotion seemed always the most eminent part of his character. St Bennet appointed St Ceolfred abbot of both his monasteries, being himself struck with a dead palsy, by which all the lower parts of his body were without life; he lay sick of this distemper three years, and for a considerable time was entirely confined to his bed. During this long illness, not being able to raise his voice to the usual course of singing the divine office, at every canonical hour he sent for some of his monks, and whilst they, being divided into two choirs, sung the psalms proper for the hour of the day or night, he endeavoured as well as he could to join not only his heart, but also his voice, with theirs. His attention to God he seemed never to relax, and frequently and earnestly exhorted his monks to a constant observance of the rule he had given them. "You must not think," said he, "that the constitutions which you have received from me were my own invention; for having in my frequent journeys visited seventeen well-ordered monasteries, I informed myself of all their laws and rules, and picking out the best among them, these I have recommended to you." The saint expired soon after, having received the viaticum on the 12th of January, in 690. His relics, according to Malmesbury,<sup>1</sup> were translated to Thorney Abbey in 970, but the monks of Glastonbury thought themselves possessed at least of part of that treasure.<sup>2</sup> The true name of our saint was Biscop Baducing, as appears from Eddius-Stephen, in his life of St Wilfrid. The English Benedictins honour him as one of the patrons of their congregation, and he is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on this day. See his life in Bede's history of the first abbots of Weremouth, published by Sir James Ware, at Dublin, in 1664.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 12 :*

ST ARCADIVS, martyred under Valerius or Diocletian, with terrible brutality. He cried to the people as he suffered: "Your gods are not gods. He for whom I die is the true God. He comforts and upholds me . . .": ST AELRED, 1167, Abbot, whose striking virtue was meekness. He was master of the household of King David of Scotland, and was long detained in the world by the claims of friendship. Eventually he joined the strict Cistercian Order at Rievaulx or Rydal, in Yorkshire, where later he became Abbot. He leaves a record of the charity of the three hundred monks he governed and of the peace in which they lived: ST BENEDICT BISCOP: ST CESARIA, virgin: ST TATIANA, virgin and martyr: ST TIGRIUS and EUTROPIUS, martyrs: and ST VICTORIANUS, Abbot.

<sup>1</sup> Malmes. lib. iv. de Pontif.

<sup>2</sup> See Monast. Aug. t. i. p. 4, and John of Glastonbury, Hist. Glaston.

JANUARY 13

ST KENTIGERN, BISHOP OF GLASCO, C., IN ANCIENT  
BRITISH, KYNDEYRN; SURNAMED MUNGHO, OR  
MUNGHU.

THIS eminent saint of the ancient church of North Britain was of royal blood among the Picts, or original inhabitants of that country, and born about the year 516. He was placed very young under the discipline of St Servanus, Bishop and Abbot of Culross, a monastery situated upon the Firth which divides Lothian from Fife. By this holy prelate he was trained up in the perfect spirit of christian meekness and piety. For his innocence and great virtues he was beloved by his master and all who were acquainted with that religious family above all his fellow-disciples, for which reason he was called Munghu, or Mungho, which in the language of that country signified "one dearly beloved"; and this is the name which the Scots usually give him to this day. When he was grown up, by the direction of St Servanus, he retired to a place called Glasghu, where he led a solitary life in great abstinence, till the clergy and people earnestly demanded him for their bishop. He was consecrated by an Irish bishop, invited over for that purpose, and fixed his see at Glasghu, or Glasco, where he assembled a numerous company of religious brethren, who formed their rule of life upon the model of the primitive Christians at Jerusalem. The saint's diocese was of vast extent, reaching from sea to sea, and being wild and uncultivated, afforded continual exercises for his zeal and patience; he travelled always on foot, sparing no pains to spread the light of the gospel amongst the unbelievers, of whom he converted and baptized great numbers. The Pelagian heresy having taken deep root among the Christians in those parts, he so vigorously opposed that fatal growing evil as entirely to banish that hydra out of the church of the Picts. Besides the recital of the whole Psalter he performed every day several other exercises of devotion; lived in a constant union of his soul with God, and by perpetual abstinence, rigorous fasts, and other extraordinary austerities, he made his whole life an uninterrupted course of penance. Every Lent he retired from the sight and conversation of men into some desert, to hold a close communication with God in solitude. As both in his virtues and labours he imitated the apostles, so God was pleased to authorise his preaching, by conferring on him an apostolic grace of the miraculous powers. Out of his monks and disciples, he sent many missionaries to preach the faith in the north of Scotland, in the isles of Orkney, in Norway, and Iceland.

In the beginning of the usurpation of Morcant Mawr, St Kentigern was obliged to fly into Wales, where he stayed some time with St David,

at Menevia, till Cathwallain (uncle to King Maelgun Gwynedh<sup>1</sup>), a religious prince of part of Denbighshire, bestowed on him the land at the meeting of the rivers Elwy and Cluid, on which he built a famous monastery and school, called from the river Elwy, Llan-Elwy, or absolutely Elgwy, where a great number of disciples and scholars soon put themselves under his direction. St Kentigern was here when St David died in 546, or rather in 544, when the 1st of March fell on a Tuesday.<sup>2</sup> After the death of the usurper Morcant, Rydderch returned from Ireland and recovered his crown, and St Kentigern, leaving his school to the care of St Asaph (whose name the town, which was raised at Elgwy, bears to this day), went back to Glasco, taking with him several hundreds of his scholars; their number having probably been much increased after the death of Daniel, Bishop of Bangor, which happened between the years 542 and 545. The return of St Kentigern to his see is generally placed about the year 560, nor can it be placed later, since in 565 he had a conference with St Columbo, when that holy man came over to Scotland, in order to convert the northern Picts, to whom St Kentigern had already sent missionaries.<sup>3</sup> Wharton therefore justly places the residence of St Kentigern in Wales from the year 543 to 560.<sup>4</sup> King Rydderch powerfully seconded the zeal of our saint in all his undertakings, being his constant friend and protector; as were the two princes who afterwards succeeded him, Guallauc (who seems to have been his son), and Morcant Mwynfawn (who was certainly his brother). The valour of Rydderch and these two successors, which is highly commended by an ancient author in Nennius, and other British historians, was the bulwark of their dominions against the inroads of the Saxons. St Kentigern employed his zeal all this time, with wonderful success, in correcting abuses, reforming the manners of his flock, and propagating the faith, was favoured with a wonderful gift of miracles, and died in 601, aged eighty-five years. His tomb, in his titular church at Glasco, was famous for miracles, and his name was always most illustrious in the Scottish calendars. See his ancient life, Leland de Scriptor; Usher, Ant. c. xv.; Hector Boetius, Leslie, &c.

This is also the Octave of the Epiphany.<sup>5</sup> The principal object of the devotion of the church on this day is the baptism of our Saviour by St John in the Jordan. We learn from the great council of Oxford, in 1222, that it was then kept a holyday of the third class, on which all were obliged to hear mass, though they might work afterwards. In France and Germany all servile work was forbidden on it, by the capitulars of Louis le Débonnaire.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Notes on St Gildas and St David.

<sup>2</sup> Vit. St Kentigerni; Usher, Antiq. c. 15, p. 358.

<sup>3</sup> Wharton de Episcopis Asaphensibus, pp. 300, 302.

<sup>5</sup> The church prolongs more solemn festivals during eight days, with a daily continuation of the sacred office proper to each such festival. This term is called its octave, and the eighth day is called the octave-day.

<sup>6</sup> Lib. ii. de feriis.

<sup>4</sup> Usher, Ant. Brit. c. xiv.

The Emperor Theodosius II forbids all civil courts and transactions during eight days before the festival of the Epiphany, and as many after it.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 13 :*

ST AGRECIUS, Bishop of Trier or Trèves for twenty years. He is said to have brought its famous relics—the Holy Coat, the Nail of the true Cross and the body of St Matthias, Apostle—to Trèves, whose schools became celebrated under his episcopate : BLESSED BERNO, Abbot of Cluny : BLESSED GODFREY, Count of Cappenburg ; he came under the influence of St Norbert and renounced the world, persuading his young wife and his brother to do the same. He did not live to be ordained, but died aged thirty in 1127 : BLESSED IVETTA or JUTTA, widow, anchoress and mystic : ST KENTIGERN or Mungo : ST POTITUS, martyr : ST VERONICA OF MILAN, whose honest peasant father never sold a horse without telling the buyer its faults rather than its good points. Veronica became a nun in the poor convent of St Martha, where her faithful observance of the rule edified all. Many miracles confirmed her sanctity. She died in 1497 after three years suffering, aged fifty-two.

JANUARY 14

ST HILARY, P. C.

(A.D. 368)

[From his own writings, and the histories of that age, which furnish the most authentic memoirs of his life. See what Dom Coutant, the Benedictin monk, has recorded of him in his excellent edition of his works ; as also Tillemont, t. vii. ; Cellier, t. v. ; and Rivet, Hist. Lit. t. i. part 2, p. 139. The two books, the one of his life, the other of his miracles, by Fortunatus of Poitiers, 600, are inaccurate. Both the Fortunatuses were from Italy ; and probably one was the author of the first, and the other the second book.]

ST AUSTIN, who often urges the authority of St Hilary against the Pelagians, styles him “ the illustrious doctor of the churches.”<sup>1</sup> St Jerom says<sup>2</sup> that he was “ a most eloquent man, and the trumpet of the Latins against the Arians ” ; and in another place, that in St Cyprian and St Hilary, God had transplanted two “ fair cedars ” out of the world into his church.<sup>3</sup>

St Hilary was born at Poitiers, and his family was one of the most illustrious in Gaul.<sup>4</sup> He spent his youth in the study of eloquence. He himself testifies that he was brought up in idolatry, and gives us a particular account of the steps by which God conducted him to the knowledge of his saving faith.<sup>5</sup> He considered by the glimmering or faint light of reason, that man, who is created a moral and free agent, is placed in this world for the exercise of patience, temperance, and other virtues, which he saw must receive from God a recompense after this life. He ardently set about learning what God is ; and after some researches into the nature of the Supreme Being, quickly discovered the absurdity of polytheism, or a plurality of gods ; and was convinced that there can be only one God, and that the same is eternal, unchangeable, all-powerful, the first cause and author of all things. Full of these reflections, he met with the holy scriptures and was wonderfully affected with that just and sublime description Moses gives of God in those words, so expressive of his self-existence,<sup>6</sup> “ I AM WHO AM ” : and was no less struck with the idea of his immensity and supreme dominion, illustrated by the most lively images in the inspired

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ii. adv. Julian. c. 8.

<sup>4</sup> St. Hieron. in Cata.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. ii. adv. Rufin. p. 415.

<sup>5</sup> Lib. i. de Trin. pp. 1-10.

<sup>3</sup> In Isa. c. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Exod. iii. 14.

language of the prophets. The reading of the New Testament put an end to, and completed, his inquiries; and he learned from the first chapter of St John that the Divine Word, God the Son, is coeternal and consubstantial with the Father. Here he checked his natural curiosity, avoided subtilties, and submitted his understanding to divine revelation, resolving what seemed incomprehensible into the veracity and power of God, and not presuming to measure divine mysteries by his shallow capacity. Being thus brought to the knowledge of faith, he received the heavenly regeneration by baptism. From that time forth he so squared his whole life by the rules of piety, and so zealous were his endeavours to confirm others in the faith of the holy Trinity, and to encourage all to virtue, that he seemed, though a layman, already to possess the grace of the priesthood.

He was married before his conversion to the faith; and his wife, by whom he had a daughter named Apra, or Abram, was yet living when he was chosen Bishop of Poitiers, about the year 353; but from the time of his ordination he lived in perpetual continency. He omitted no endeavours to escape this promotion; but his humility only made the people the more earnest to see him vested with that dignity: and indeed their expectations were not frustrated in him, for his eminent virtue and capacity shone forth with such a lustre as soon drew upon him the attention not only of all Gaul, but of the whole church. Soon after he was raised to the episcopal dignity, he composed before his exile elegant comments on the gospel of St Matthew, which are still extant. Those on the Psalms he compiled after his banishment.<sup>1</sup> On these comments on the Psalms, and on St Matthew, we are chiefly to understand St Jerom, when he recommends, in a particular manner, the reading of the works of St Hilary to virgins and devout persons.<sup>2</sup> From that time the Arian controversy chiefly employed his pen. He was an excellent orator and poet. His style is lofty and noble, beautified with rhetorical ornaments and figures, but somewhat studied; and the length of his periods renders him sometimes obscure to the unlearned, as St Jerom takes notice.<sup>3</sup> It is observed by Dr Cave that all his writings breathe an extraordinary vein of piety. St Hilary solemnly appeals to God<sup>4</sup> that he held it as the great work of his life to employ all his faculties to announce God to the world, and to excite all men to the love of him. He earnestly recommends the practice of beginning every action and discourse by prayer, and some act of divine praise;<sup>5</sup> as also to meditate on the law of God day and night, to pray without ceasing, by performing all our actions with a view to God their ultimate end, and to his glory.<sup>6</sup> He breathes a sincere and ardent desire of martyrdom, and

<sup>1</sup> St Hilary. in Ps. liii. n. 8; in Ps. lxvii. n. 15; and Contant, Armon. in St Hilary. in Psalms, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. ad Letam.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. i. de Trinit.

<sup>4</sup> In Ps. lxiv.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 49, ad Paulinum. t. iv. p. 567.

<sup>6</sup> In Ps. i pp. 10. 20.

discovers a soul fearless of death and torments. He had the greatest veneration for truth, sparing no pains in its pursuit, and dreading no danger in its defence.

The Emperor Constantius, having laboured for several years to compel the eastern churches to embrace Arianism, came into the West; and after the overthrow of the tyrant Magnentius, made some stay at Arles, whilst his Arian bishops held a council there, in which they engaged Saturninus, the impious bishop of that city, in their party, in 353. A bolder Arian council at Milan, in 355, held during the residence of the emperor in that city, required all to sign the condemnation of St Athanasius. Such as refused to comply were banished; among whom were St Eusebius of Vercelli, Lucifer of Cagliari, and St Dionysius of Milan, into whose see Auxentius, the Arian, was intruded. St Hilary wrote on that occasion his first book to Constantius, in which he mildly entreated him to restore peace to the church. He separated himself from the three Arian bishops in the West, Ursacius, Valens, and Saturninus, and exhibited an accusation against the last in a synod at Beziers. But the emperor, who had information of the matter from Saturninus, sent an order to Julian, then Cæsar, and surnamed afterwards the Apostate, who at that time commanded in Gaul, for St Hilary's immediate banishment into Phrygia, together with St Rhodanius, Bishop of Toulouse. The bishops in Gaul being almost all orthodox, remained in communion with St Hilary, and would not suffer the intrusion of any one into his see, which in his absence he continued to govern by his priests. The saint went into banishment about the middle of the year 356 with as great alacrity as another would take a journey of pleasure, and never entertained the least disquieting thought of hardships, dangers, or enemies, having a soul above both the smiles and frowns of the world, and fixed only on God. He remained in exile somewhat upwards of three years, which time he employed in composing several learned works. The principal and most esteemed of these is that "On the Trinity, against the Arians," in twelve books. In them he proves the consubstantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

In his exile he was informed that his daughter Apra, whom he had left in Gaul, had thoughts of embracing the married state; upon which he implored Christ, with many tears, to bestow on her the precious jewel of virginity. He sent her a letter that is still extant, in which he acquaints her that if she contemned all earthly things, spouse, sumptuous garments, and riches, Christ had prepared for her, and had shown unto him, at his prayers and tears, an inestimable never-fading diamond, infinitely more precious than she was able to frame to herself an idea of. He conjures her by the God of heaven, and entreats her not to make void his anxiety for her, nor to deprive herself of so incomparable a good. Fortunatus assures us that the original letter was kept with veneration in the church



of Poitiers in the sixth century, when he wrote, and that Apra followed his advice, and died happily at his feet after his return.<sup>1</sup> St Hilary sent to her with this letter two hymns, composed by himself: one for evening, which does not seem to have reached our times; the other for the morning, which is the hymn "Lucis largitor splendide."

St Hilary, who had withdrawn from Seleucia to Constantinople, presented to the emperor a request, called his second book to Constantius, begging the liberty of holding a public disputation about religion with Saturninus, the author of his banishment. He pressed him to receive the unchangeable apostolic faith, injured by the late innovations, and smartly rallies the fickle humour of the heretics, who were perpetually making new creeds and condemning their old ones, having made four within the compass of the foregoing year. The issue of this challenge was that the Arians, dreading such a trial, persuaded the emperor to rid the East of a man that never ceased to disturb its peace, by sending him back into Gaul; which he did, but without reversing the sentence of his banishment, in 360.

St Hilary returned through Illyricum and Italy to confirm the weak. He was received at Poitiers with the greatest demonstrations of joy and triumph, where his old disciple, St Martin, rejoined him, to pursue the exercises of piety under his direction. A synod in Gaul, convoked at the instance of St Hilary, condemned that of Rimini, which, in 359, had omitted the word *Consubstantial*. Saturninus, proving obstinate, was excommunicated and deposed for his heresy and other crimes. Scandals were removed, discipline, peace, and purity of faith were restored, and piety flourished. The death of Constantius put an end to the Arian persecution. St Hilary was the mildest of men, full of condescension and affability to all: yet seeing this behaviour ineffectual, he composed an invective against Constantius, in which he employed severity and the harshest terms; and for which undoubtedly he had reasons that are unknown to us. This piece did not appear abroad till after the death of that emperor. Our saint undertook a journey to Milan, in 364, against Auxentius, the Arian usurper of that see, and in a public disputation obliged him to confess Christ to be true God, of the same substance and divinity with the Father. St Hilary indeed saw through his hypocrisy; but this dissembling heretic imposed so far on the emperor Valentinian as to pass for orthodox. Our saint died at Poitiers in the year 368, on the 13th of January, or on the 1st of November, for his name occurs in very ancient Martyrologies on both these days. In the Roman breviary his office is celebrated on the 14th of January. The one is probably that of some translation of his relics. The first was made at Poitiers in the

<sup>1</sup> This letter is commended by the most judicious critics, Baronius, Tillemont, Fleury, and Coutant, a monk of the congregation of St Maur, in his edition of the works of St Hilary, and others. The style is not pompous, but adapted to the capacity of a girl of thirteen years of age.

reign of Clovis I, on which see Cointe.<sup>1</sup> From St Gregory of Tours it appears that before his time some part of St Hilary's relics was honoured in a church in Limousin.<sup>2</sup> Alcuin mentions the veneration of the same at Poitiers;<sup>3</sup> and it is related that his relics were burned by the Huguenots at Poitiers.<sup>4</sup> But this we must understand of some small portion, or of the dust remaining in his tomb. For his remains were translated from Poitiers to the abbey of St Denys, near Paris, as is proved by the tradition of that abbey, a writer of the abbey of Richenow in the ninth century,<sup>5</sup> and other monuments.<sup>6</sup> Many miracles performed by St Hilary are related by Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, and are the subject of a whole book added to his life, which seems to have been written by another Fortunatus. St Gregory of Tours, Flodoard, and others have mentioned several wrought at his tomb. Dom Coutant, the most judicious and learned Maurist monk, has given an accurate edition of his works, in one volume in folio, at Paris, in 1693, which was reprinted at Verona by the Marquess Scipio Maffei in 1730, together with additional comments on several Psalms.

St Hilary observes that singleness of heart is the most necessary condition of faith and true virtue, "For Christ teaches that only those who become again as it were little children, and by the simplicity of that age cut off the inordinate affections of vice, can enter the kingdom of heaven. These follow and obey their father, love their mother; are strangers to covetousness, ill-will, hatred, arrogance, and lying, and are inclined easily to believe what they hear. This disposition of affections opens the way to heaven. We must therefore return to the simplicity of little children, in which we shall bear some resemblance to our Lord's humility."<sup>7</sup> This, in the language of the Holy Ghost, is called the foolishness of the cross of Christ,<sup>8</sup> in which consists true wisdom. That prudence of the flesh and worldly wisdom, which is the mother of self-sufficiency, pride, avarice, and vicious curiosity, the source of infidelity, and the declared enemy of the spirit of Christ, is banished by this holy simplicity; and in its stead are obtained true wisdom, which can only be found in a heart freed from the clouds of the passions, perfect prudence, which, as St Thomas shows, is the fruit of the assemblage of all virtues, and a divine light which grace fails not to infuse. This simplicity, which is the mother of christian discretion, is a stranger to all artifice, design, and dissimulation, to all views or desires of self-interest, and to all undue respect or consideration of creatures. All its desires and views are reduced to this alone, of attaining

<sup>1</sup> Cointe Annal. Fr. ad ann. 538, n. 41, 42, 43.

<sup>2</sup> L. de Gl. Conf. c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Baillet, Vie de St Hilaire:

<sup>4</sup> Aimoin. lib. iv. c. 17 & 33.

<sup>5</sup> Coutant, Vit. St Hilar. pp. cxxiv. cxxv. cxxxix

<sup>6</sup> St Hilar. in Matt. c. 18. v. i. p. 698.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. i. 17, & iii. 18; St Hilar. lib. 3, de Trin. n. 24, 25, pp. 822, 823.

<sup>8</sup> Alcuin, Hom. de St Willibrordo.

<sup>9</sup> Ap. Mab. anal. t. iv. p. 644.

to the perfect union with God. Unfeignedly to desire this one thing, to belong to God alone, to arrive at his pure love, and to do his will in all things, is that simplicity or singleness of heart of which we speak, and which banishes all inordinate affections of the heart, from which arise the most dangerous errors of the understanding.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 14 :*

ST BARBASYMAS (or Barbashemin) and COMPANIONS, martyred for refusing to worship fire and water, the Persian divinities. St Maruthas has left us a lengthy account of Barbasyms, who succeeded his brother in the see of Seleucia. The biographer was not able to recover the names of those who died with him. ST DATIUS, Bishop of Milan : ST FELIX of Nola : ST HILARY : ST MACRINA the Elder, widow : the MARTYRS of MOUNT SINAI and RAITHU, thirty-eight holy solitaries, many anchorets of Mount Sinai and other hermits in the Desert of Raithu, martyred by Arabians and by Saracens at the end of the fourth century. Among them a boy of fourteen led a life of singular holiness, refusing at the end to betray where the monks had hidden. BLESSED ODO of Novaria, Confessor : ST SABAS, Archbishop of Servia : THE VENERABLE WILLIAM LLOYD or Floyd, priest, who died in prison, January 14, 1679, six days before the date fixed for his execution. He had served on the Welsh mission ; convicted at Brecknock for treason in having taken orders in the church of Rome. His written declaration, which he intended to read to the people before his martyrdom, is still extant. ST KENTIGERN is honoured this day in the diocese of Glasgow.

JANUARY 15

ST PAUL, THE FIRST HERMIT

(A.D. 342)

[From his life, compiled by St Jerom in 365. Pope Gelasius I, in his learned Roman council, in 494, commends this authentic history. St Paul is also mentioned by Cassian, St Fulgentius, Sulpitius Severus, Sidonius, Paulinus, in the life of St Ambrose, &c. St Jerom received this account from two disciples of St Antony, Amathas and Macarius. St Athanasius says that he only wrote what he had heard from St Antony's own mouth, or from his disciples, and desires others to add what they knew concerning his actions. On the various readings and MS. copies of this life, see the disquisition of F. Jer. de Prato, an oratorian of Verona, in his new edition of the works of Sulpitius Severus, t. i. app. 2, p. 493. The Greek history of St Paul the hermit, which Bollandus imagines St Jerom to have followed, is evidently posterior, and borrows from him, as Jos. Assemani shows. Comm. in Calend. Univ. t. vi. p. 82. See Gudij Epistolæ, p. 278.]

ELIAS and St John the Baptist sanctified the deserts, and Jesus Christ himself was a model of the eremitical state during his forty days' fast in the wilderness; neither is it to be questioned but the Holy Ghost conducted the saint of this day, though young, into the desert, and was to him an instructor there: but it is not less certain that an entire solitude and total sequestration of one's self from human society is one of those extraordinary ways by which God leads souls to himself, and is more worthy of our admiration than calculated for imitation and practice; it is a state which ought only to be embraced by such as are already well experienced in the practices of virtue and contemplation, and who can resist sloth and other temptations, lest, instead of being a help, it prove a snare and stumbling-block in their way to heaven.

This saint was a native of the Lower Thebais in Egypt, and had lost both his parents when he was but fifteen years of age: nevertheless he was a great proficient in the Greek and Egyptian learning, was mild and modest, and feared God from his earliest youth. The bloody persecution

of Decius disturbed the peace of the church in 250; and what was most dreadful, Satan, by his ministers, sought not so much to kill the bodies as by subtle artifices and tedious tortures to destroy the souls of men. During these times of danger, Paul kept himself concealed in the house of another; but finding that a brother-in-law was inclined to betray him, that he might enjoy his estate, he fled into the deserts. There he found many spacious caverns in a rock, which were said to have been the retreat of money-coiners in the days of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. He chose for his dwelling a cave in this place, near which were a palm-tree<sup>1</sup> and a clear spring; the former by its leaves furnished him with raiment, and by its fruit with food; and the latter supplied him with water for his drink.

Paul was twenty-two years old when he entered the desert. His first intention was to enjoy the liberty of serving God till the persecution should cease; but relishing the sweets of heavenly contemplation and penance, and learning the spiritual advantages of holy solitude, he resolved to return no more among men, or concern himself in the least with human affairs, and what passed in the world: it was enough for him to know that there was a world, and to pray that it might be improved in goodness. The saint lived on the fruit of his tree till he was forty-three years of age, and from that time till his death, like Elias, he was miraculously fed with bread brought him every day by a raven. His method of life, and what he did in this place during ninety years, is unknown to us: but God was pleased to make his servant known a little before his death.

The great St Antony, who was then ninety years of age, was tempted to vanity, as if no one had served God so long in the wilderness as he had done, imagining himself also to be the first example of a life so recluse from human conversation: but the contrary was discovered to him in a dream the night following, and the saint was at the same time commanded by Almighty God to set out forthwith in quest of a perfect servant of his, concealed in the more remote parts of those deserts. The holy old man set out the next morning in search of the unknown hermit. St Jerom relates from his authors that he met a centaur, or creature not with the nature and properties, but with something of the mixed shape of man and horse,<sup>2</sup> and that this monster, or phantom of the devil (St Jerom pretends not to determine which it was), upon his making the sign of the cross, fled away, after having pointed out the way to the saint. Our author adds that St Antony soon after met a satyr,<sup>3</sup> who gave him to

<sup>1</sup> Pliny recounts thirty-nine different sorts of palm-trees, and says that the best grow in Egypt, which are ever green, have leaves thick enough to make ropes, and a fruit which serves in some places to make bread.

<sup>2</sup> Pliny, lib. vii. c. 3, and others, assure us that such monsters have been seen. Consult the note on Rosveide.

<sup>3</sup> The heathens might feign their gods of the woods, from certain monsters sometimes seen. Plutarch, in his life of Sylla, says that a satyr was brought to that general at Athens; and St Jerom tells us that one was shown alive at Alexandria, and after its death was salted and embalmed, and sent to Antioch, that Constantine the Great might see it.

understand that he was an inhabitant of those deserts, and one of that sort whom the deluded Gentiles adored for gods. St Antony, after two days and a night spent in the search, discovered the saint's abode by a light that was in it, which he made up to.

Having long begged admittance at the door of his cell, St Paul at last opened it, with a smile: they embraced, called each other by their names, which they knew by divine revelation. St Paul then inquired whether idolatry still reigned in the world. While they were discoursing together, a raven flew towards them, and dropped a loaf of bread before them. Upon which St Paul said, "Our good God has sent us a dinner. In this manner have I received half a loaf every day these sixty years past; now you are come to see me, Christ has doubled his provision for his servants." Having given thanks to God, they both sat down by the fountain; but a little contest arose between them who should break the bread; St Antony alleged St Paul's greater age, and St Paul pleaded that St Antony was the stranger: both agreed at last to take up their parts together. Having refreshed themselves at the spring, they spent the night in prayer. The next morning St Paul told his guest that the time of his death approached, and that he was sent to bury him, adding, "Go and fetch the cloak given you by St Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in which I desire you to wrap my body." This he might say with the intent of being left alone in prayer whilst he expected to be called out of this world; as also that he might testify his veneration for St Athanasius, and his high regard for the faith and communion of the catholic church, on account of which that holy bishop was then a great sufferer. St Antony was surprised to hear him mention the cloak, which he could not have known but by divine revelation. Whatever was his motive for desiring to be buried in it, St Antony acquiesced to what was asked of him: so, after mutual embraces, he hastened to his monastery to comply with St Paul's request. He told his monks that he, a sinner, falsely bore the name of a servant of God; but that he had seen Elias and John the Baptist in the wilderness, even Paul in Paradise. Having taken the cloak, he returned with it in all haste, fearing lest the holy hermit might be dead, as it happened. Whilst on his road he saw his happy soul carried up to heaven, attended by choirs of angels, prophets, and apostles. St Antony, though he rejoiced on St Paul's account, could not help lamenting on his own, for having lost a treasure so lately discovered. As soon as his sorrow would permit, he arose, pursued his journey, and came to the cave. Going in, he found the body kneeling, and the hands stretched out. Full of joy, and supposing him yet alive, he knelt down to pray with him, but by his silence soon perceived he was dead. Having paid his last respects to the holy corpse, he carried it out of the cave. Whilst he stood perplexed how to dig a grave, two lions came up quietly, and as it were mourning; and

tearing up the ground, made a hole large enough for the reception of a human body. St Antony then buried the corpse, singing hymns and psalms, according to what was usual and appointed by the church on that occasion. After this he returned home praising God, and related to his monks what he had seen and done. He always kept as a great treasure, and wore himself on great festivals, the garment of St Paul, of palm-tree leaves patched together. St Paul died in the year of our Lord 342, the hundred and thirteenth year of his age, and the ninetieth of his solitude, and is usually called the "first hermit," to distinguish him from others of that name.

St Paul the hermit is commemorated in several ancient western Martyrologies on the 10th of January, but in the Roman on the 15th, on which he is honoured in the anthologium of the Greeks.

An eminent contemplative draws the following portraiture of this great model of an eremitical life:<sup>1</sup> St Paul the hermit, not being called by God to the external duties of an active life, remained alone, conversing only with God, in a vast wilderness, for the space of near a hundred years, ignorant of all that passed in the world, both of progress of sciences, the establishment of religion, and the revolutions of states and empires; indifferent even as to those things without which he could not live—as the air which he breathed, the water he drank, and the miraculous bread with which he supported life. What did he do? say the inhabitants of this busy world, who think they could not live without being in a perpetual hurry of restless projects—what was his employment all this while? Alas! ought we not rather to put this question to them—What are you doing whilst you are not taken up in doing the will of God, which occupies the heavens and the earth in all their motions? Do you call that doing nothing which is the great end God proposed to himself in giving us a being—that is, to be employed in contemplating, adoring, and praising him? To be employed in anything else, how great or noble soever it may appear in the eyes of men, unless it be referred to God, and be the accomplishment of his holy will, who in all our actions demands our heart more than our hand, what is it but to turn ourselves away from our end, to lose our time, and voluntarily to return again to that state of nothing out of which we were formed, or rather into a far worse state?

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 15 :*

ST ALEXANDER AKIMETES, Confessor, 430 : ST BONITUS, Bishop of Auvergne : ST CEOLWULF, king and Confessor : ST EMBERT, Bishop of Cambrai, Confessor : ST EPHYSIES ; BL. FRANCIS DE CAPILLAS, proto-martyr of China : ST ISADORE, priest of Scété and hermit in that desert : ST ITA or Ida or Mida, Abbess of a nunnery at Newcastle in Limerick, died 570 : ST JOHN CALYBITES, about 450 : ST MALARD, Bishop of Chartres, Confessor, present at the Council of Chalon-sur-Aône in 650 : ST MAURUS, brought up under St Benedict and favoured by God with many miracles : ST PAUL, Hermit, 342 : BLESSED PETER OF CASTELNAU, martyr : and ST TARSITIA, virgin.

<sup>1</sup> F. Ambrose de Lombez, Capucin, Tr. de la Paix Intérieure (Paris, 1758), p. 372.

JANUARY 16

## ST MACARIUS, THE ELDER, OF EGYPT

(A.D. 390)

[From the original authors of the lives of the fathers of the deserts, in Rosweide, D'Andilly, Bollandus, 15 Jan.; Tillemont, t. viii. p. 576; collated with a very ancient manuscript of the Lives of the Fathers, published by Rosweide, &c., in the hands of Mr Martin, of Palgrave, in Suffolk.]

ST MACARIUS, the Elder, was born in Upper Egypt, about the year 300, and brought up in the country in tending cattle. In his childhood, in company with some others, he once stole a few figs, and ate one of them, but, from his conversion to his death, he never ceased to weep bitterly for this sin.<sup>1</sup> By a powerful call of divine grace, he retired from the world in his youth, and, dwelling in a little cell in a village, made mats, in continual prayer and great austerities. A wicked woman falsely accused him of having deflowered her, for which supposed crime he was dragged through the streets, beaten, and insulted, as a base hypocrite under the garb of a monk. He suffered all with patience, and sent the woman what he earned by his work, saying to himself, "Well, Macarius, having now another to provide for, thou must work the harder." But God discovered his innocency; for the woman falling in labour, lay in extreme anguish, and could not be delivered till she had named the true father of her child. The people converted their rage into the greatest admiration of the humility and patience of the saint.<sup>2</sup> To shun the esteem of men, he fled into the vast hideous desert of Scété, being then about thirty years of age. In this solitude he lived sixty years, and became the spiritual parent of innumerable holy persons, who put themselves under his direction, and were governed by the rules he prescribed them; but all dwelt in separate hermitages. St Macarius admitted only one disciple with him to entertain strangers. He was compelled by an Egyptian bishop to receive the order of priesthood about the year 340, the fortieth of his age, that he might celebrate the divine mysteries for the convenience of this holy colony. When the desert became better peopled, there were four churches built in it, which were served by so many priests. The austerities of St Macarius were excessive; he usually ate but once a week. Evagrius, his disciple, once asked him leave to drink a little water under a parching thirst, but Macarius bade him to content himself with reposing a little in the shade, saying, "For these twenty years I have never once ate, drank, or slept as much as nature required."<sup>3</sup> His face was very pale, and his body weak and parched up. To deny his own will, he did not refuse to drink a little wine when others desired him; but then he would punish himself for this indulgence by abstaining two or three days from all manner of drink;

<sup>1</sup> Bolland. 15 Jan., p. 1011, § 39; Cotel. Mor. Cr. t. i. p. 546.

<sup>2</sup> Cotel. *ibid.* p. 525; Rosweide, Vit. Patr. lib. iii. c. 99, lib. v. c. 15, § 25, p. 623.

<sup>3</sup> Socrates, lib. iv. c. 23.

and it was for this reason that his disciple desired strangers never to tender unto him a drop of wine.<sup>1</sup> He delivered his instructions in few words, and principally inculcated silence, humility, mortification, retirement, and continual prayer, especially the last, to all sorts of people. He used to say, "In prayer you need not use many or lofty words. You can often repeat with a sincere heart, Lord, show me mercy as thou knowest best! or, Assist me, O God!"<sup>2</sup> He was much delighted with this ejaculation of perfect resignation and love—"O Lord, have mercy on me, as thou pleasest, and knowest best in thy goodness!" His mildness and patience were invincible, and occasioned the conversion of a heathen priest and many others.<sup>3</sup> The devil told him one day, "I can surpass thee in watching, fasting, and many other things, but humility conquers and disarms me."<sup>4</sup> A young man applying to St Macarius for spiritual advice, he directed him to go to a burial-place and upbraid the dead, and after to go and flatter them. When he came back, the saint asked him what answer the dead had made. "None at all," said the other, "either to reproaches or praises." "Then," replied Macarius, "go, and learn neither to be moved with injuries nor flatteries. If you die to the world and to yourself, you will begin to live to Christ." He said to another, "Receive, from the hand of God, poverty as cheerfully as riches, hunger and want as plenty, and you will conquer the devil, and subdue all your passions."<sup>5</sup> A certain monk complained to him that in solitude he was always tempted to break his fast, whereas in the monastery he could fast the whole week cheerfully. "Vainglory is the reason," replied the saint: "fasting pleases when men see you, but seems intolerable when that passion is not gratified."<sup>6</sup> One came to consult him who was molested with temptations to impurity; the saint examining the source, found it to be sloth, and advised him never to eat before sunset, to meditate fervently at his work, and to labour vigorously, without sloth, the whole day. The other faithfully complied, and was freed from his enemy. God revealed to St Macarius that he had not attained the perfection of two married women who lived in a certain town; he made them a visit, and learned the means by which they sanctified themselves. They were extremely careful never to speak any idle or rash words; they lived in the constant practice of humility, patience, meekness, charity, resignation, mortification of their own will, and conformity to the humours of their husbands and others, where the divine law did not interpose; in a spirit of recollection they sanctified all their actions by ardent ejaculations, by which they strove to praise God, and most fervently to consecrate to the divine glory all the powers of their soul and body.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rosweide, Vit. Patr. lib. iii. § 3, p. 505, lib. v. c. 4, § 26, p. 569.

<sup>2</sup> Rosweide, lib. iii. c. 20, lib. v. c. 12; Cotel. p. 537.

<sup>3</sup> Rosweide, lib. iii. c. 127; Cotel. t. i. p. 547.

<sup>4</sup> Rosweide, lib. v. c. 15

<sup>5</sup> Rosweide, lib. vii. c. 38; Cotel. t. i. p. 587; Rosweide, ibid. § 9.

<sup>6</sup> Cassian. Collat. v. c. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Rosweide, lib. iii. c. 97, lib. vi. c. 3, § 17, p. 657.



Our saint, knowing that his end drew near, made a visit to the monks of Nitria, and exhorted them to compunction and tears so pathetically, that they all fell weeping at his feet. "Let us weep, brethren," said he, "and let our eyes pour forth floods of tears before we go hence, lest we fall into that place where tears will only increase the flames in which we shall burn."<sup>1</sup> He went to receive the reward of his labours in the year 390, and of his age the ninetieth, having spent sixty years in the desert of Scété.<sup>2</sup>

He seems to have been the first anchoret who inhabited this vast wilderness, and this Cassian affirms.<sup>3</sup> Some style him a disciple of St Antony; but that quality rather suits St Macarius of Alexandria, for, by the history of our saint's life, it appears that he could not have lived under the direction of St Antony before he retired into the desert of Scété. But he afterwards paid a visit, if not several, to that holy patriarch of monks, whose dwelling was fifteen days' journey distant.<sup>4</sup> This glorious saint is honoured in the Roman Martyrology on the 15th of January; in the Greek Menæa on the 19th. An ancient monastic rule, and an epistle addressed to monks, written in sentences, like the Book of Proverbs, are ascribed to St Macarius. Tillemont thinks them more probably the works of St Macarius of Alexandria, who had under his inspection at Nitria five thousand monks.<sup>5</sup> Genadius<sup>6</sup> says that St Macarius wrote nothing but this letter. This may be understood of St Macarius of Alexandria, though one who wrote in Gaul might not have seen all the works of an author whose country was so remote and language different. Fifty spiritual homilies are ascribed, in the first edition, and in some manuscripts, to St Macarius of Egypt; yet F. Possin<sup>7</sup> thinks they rather belong to Macarius of Pispir, who attended St Antony at his death, and seems to have been some years older than the two great Macariuses, though some have thought him the same with the Alexandrian.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 16 :*

ST FERRIOLUS, Bishop of Grenoble, towards the end of the seventh century : FIVE FRIARS MINOR, BERARDUS, PETER, ACCURSUS, ADJUTUS and OTTO, sent by St Francis to preach to the Mahometans of the West and martyred in Morocco 1220, the earliest of the glorious army of Franciscan martyrs : ST FURSEY, born in Ireland and famous for his wonderful visions, described by St Bede; died on this date in 648 : BLESSED GONSALVO of Amaranthia, Confessor : BLESSED HENRY, hermit in the little island of Cocket, or Coquet, on the coast of Northumberland : ST HONORATUS, who renounced the worship of idols in his youth and won his elder brother Venantius to Christ. Honoratus led an emeritical life, then founded the famous monastery of Lerins; succeeded St Hilary as Archbishop of Arles in 426 : ST JAMES, Bishop of Tarantaise : ST MACARIUS THE ELDER, who died aged ninety, having spent sixty years in the desert of Scété : ST MARCELLUS, pope and martyr : ST PRISCILLA, matron : ST TARANTAISE : ST TRIVERIUS, hermit, Monk of Lyons, where he is liturgically commemorated.

<sup>1</sup> Rosweide, Vit. Patr. lib. v. c. 3, § 9; Cotel. Mon. Gr. p. 545.

<sup>2</sup> Pallad. Lausiaca, c. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Cassian, Colat. xv. c. 13; Tillem. note 3, p. 806.

<sup>4</sup> Rosweide, Vit. Patr. lib. v. c. 7, § 9; Cotel. Apothegm. Patr. 530; Tillem. art. iv. p. 581, and note 4, p. 806.

<sup>5</sup> See Tillem. note 3, p. 806.

<sup>6</sup> Gennad. Cat. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Possin, Ascet. pr. p. 17.

JANUARY 17

## ST ANTONY, ABBOT, PATRIARCH OF MONKS

(A.D. 356)

[From his life, compiled by the great St Athanasius, vol. ii. p. 473, a work much commended by St Gregory Nazianzen, St Jerom, St Austin, Rufinus, Palladius, &c. St Chrysostom recommends to all persons the reading of this pious history, as full of instruction and edification. Hom. viii. in Matt. t. vii. p. 128. It contributed to the conversion of St Austin. Confess. lib. viii. c. 6 and 28. See Tillemont, t. vii.; Helyot, t. i.; Stevens, Addit. t. i.; Ceillier, &c.]

ST ANTONY was born at Coma, a village near Heraclea, or Great Heracleopolis, in Upper Egypt, on the borders of Arcadia, or middle Egypt, in 251. His parents, who were Christians, and rich, to prevent his being tainted by bad example and vicious conversation, kept him always at home; so that he grew up unacquainted with any branch of human literature, and could read no language but his own. He was remarkable from his childhood for his temperance, a close attendance on church duties, and a punctual obedience to his parents. By their death he found himself possessed of a very considerable estate, and charged with the care of a younger sister, before he was twenty years of age. Nearly six months after, he heard read in the church those words of Christ to the rich young man: "Go sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."<sup>1</sup> He considered these words as addressed to himself; going home, he made over to his neighbours three hundred *aruras*, that is, above one hundred and twenty acres of good land, that he and his sister might be free for ever from all public taxes and burdens. The rest of his estate he sold, and gave the price to the poor, except what he thought necessary for himself and his sister. Soon after, hearing in the church those other words of Christ, "Be not solicitous for to-morrow,"<sup>2</sup> he also distributed in alms the movables which he had reserved; and placed his sister in a house of virgins, which most moderns take to be the first instance mentioned in history of a nunnery. She was afterward intrusted with the care and direction of others in that holy way of life. Antony himself retired into a solitude near his village, in imitation of a certain old man who led the life of a hermit in the neighbourhood of Coma.

The devil assailed him by various temptations; first, he represented to him divers good works he might have been able to do with his estate in the world, and the difficulties of his present condition—a common artifice of the enemy, whereby he strives to make a soul slothful or dissatisfied in her vocation, in which God expects to be glorified by her. Being discovered and repulsed by the young novice, he varied his method of attack, and annoyed him night and day with filthy thoughts and obscene imaginations. Antony opposed to his assaults the strictest watchfulness over his senses, austere fasts, humility, and prayer, till Satan, appearing in a visible form,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 21.<sup>2</sup> Matt. vi. 34.

first of a woman coming to seduce him, then of a black boy to terrify him, at length confessed himself vanquished. The saint's food was only bread, with a little salt, and he drank nothing but water; he never ate before sunset, and sometimes only once in two or four days: he lay on a rush mat or on the bare floor. In quest of a more remote solitude he withdrew further from Coma, and hid himself in an old sepulchre; whither a friend brought him from time to time a little bread. Satan was here again permitted to assault him in a visible manner, to terrify him with dismal noises; and once he so grievously beat him that he lay almost dead, covered with bruises and wounds; and in this condition he was one day found by his friend, who visited him from time to time to supply him with bread during all the time he lived in the ruinous sepulchre. When he began to come to himself, though not yet able to stand, he cried out to the devils whilst he yet lay on the floor, "Behold! here I am; do all you are able against me: nothing shall ever separate me from Christ my Lord." Hereupon the fiends appearing again, renewed the attack, and alarmed him with terrible clamours and a variety of spectres, in hideous shapes of the most frightful wild beasts, which they assumed to dismay and terrify him; till a ray of heavenly light breaking in upon him chased them away, and caused him to cry out, "Where wast thou, my Lord and my Master? Why wast thou not here, from the beginning of my conflict, to assuage my pains!" A voice answered: "Antony, I was here the whole time; I stood by thee, and beheld thy combat: and because thou hast manfully withstood thy enemies, I will always protect thee, and will render thy name famous throughout the earth." At these words the saint arose, much cheered and strengthened, to pray and return thanks to his deliverer. Hitherto the saint, ever since his retreat in 272, had lived in solitary places, not very far from his village; and St Athanasius observes, that before him many fervent persons led retired lives in penance and contemplation near the towns; others remaining in the towns imitated the same manner of life.

To satisfy the importunities of others, about the year 305, the fifty-fifth of his age, he came down from his mountain, and founded his first monastery at Phaïum. The dissipation occasioned by this undertaking led him into a temptation of despair, which he overcame by prayer and hard manual labour. In this new manner of life his daily refection was six ounces of bread soaked in water, with a little salt; to which he sometimes added a few dates. He took it generally after sunset, but on some days at three o'clock; and in his old age he added a little oil. Sometimes he ate only once in three or four days, yet appeared vigorous, and always cheerful: strangers knew him from among his disciples by the joy which was always painted on his countenance, resulting from the inward peace and composure of his soul. Retirement in his cell was his delight, and

divine contemplation and prayer his perpetual occupation. Coming to take his refecton, he often burst into tears, and was obliged to leave his brethren and the table without touching any nourishment, reflecting on the employment of the blessed spirits in heaven, who praise God without ceasing.<sup>1</sup> He exhorted his brethren to allot the least time they possibly could to the care of the body. Notwithstanding which, he was very careful never to place perfection in mortification, as Cassian observes, but in charity, in which it was his whole study continually to improve his soul. His under garment was sackcloth, over which he wore a white coat of sheepskin with a girdle. He instructed his monks to have eternity always present to their minds, and to reflect every morning that perhaps they might not live till night, and every evening that perhaps they might never see the morning; and to perform every action as if it were the last of their lives, with all the fervour of their souls to please God. He often exhorted them to watch against temptations, and to resist the devil with vigour: and spoke admirably of his weakness, saying, "He dreads fasting, prayer, humility, and good works: he is not able even to stop my mouth who speak against him. The illusions of the devil soon vanish, especially if a man arms himself with the sign of the cross.<sup>2</sup> The devils tremble at the sign of the cross of our Lord, by which he triumphed over and disarmed them."<sup>3</sup> He told them in what manner the fiend in his rage had assaulted him by visible phantoms, but that these disappeared whilst he persevered in prayer. He told them, that once when the devil appeared to him in glory, and said, "Ask what you please; I am the power of God": he invoked the holy name of Jesus, and he vanished. Maximinus renewed the persecution in 311; St Antony, hoping to receive the crown of martyrdom, went to Alexandria, served and encouraged the martyrs in the mines and dungeons, before the tribunals, and at the places of execution. He publicly wore his white monastic habit, and appeared in the sight of the governor; yet took care never presumptuously to provoke the judges, or impeach himself, as some rashly did. In 312, the persecution being abated, he returned to his monastery and immured himself in his cell. Some time after he built another monastery called Pispir, near the Nile; but he chose, for the most part, to shut himself up in a remote cell upon a mountain of difficult access, with Macarius, a disciple, who entertained strangers. If he found them to be *Hierosolymites*, or spiritual men, St Antony himself sat with them in discourse; if Egyptians (by which name they meant worldly persons), then Macarius entertained them, and St Antony only appeared to give them a short exhortation. Once the saint saw in a vision the whole earth covered so thick with snares that it seemed scarce possible to set down a foot without falling into them. At this sight he cried out, trembling, "Who, O Lord, can escape them all?"

<sup>1</sup> St Athan. Vit. Anton. n. 45. p. 830.<sup>2</sup> P. 814.<sup>3</sup> P. 823, ed. Ben.

A voice answered him: "Humility, O Antony!"<sup>1</sup> St Antony always looked upon himself as the least and the very outcast of mankind; he listened to the advice of every one, and professed that he received benefit from that of the meanest person. He cultivated and pruned a little garden on his desert mountain, that he might have herbs always at hand, to present a refreshment to those who, on coming to see him, were always weary by travelling over a vast wilderness and inhospitable mountain, as St Athanasius mentions. This tillage was not the only manual labour in which St Antony employed himself. The same venerable author speaks of his making mats as an ordinary occupation. We are told that he once fell into dejection, finding uninterrupted contemplation above his strength; but was taught to apply himself at intervals to manual labour by a vision of an angel who appeared plating mats of palm-tree leaves, then rising to pray, and after some time sitting down again to work; and who at length said to him, "Do thus, and thou shalt be saved."<sup>2</sup> But St Athanasius informs us that our saint continued in some degree to pray whilst he was at work. He watched great part of the nights in heavenly contemplation; and sometimes, when the rising sun called him to his daily tasks, he complained that its visible light robbed him of the greater interior light which he enjoyed, and interrupted his close application and solitude.<sup>3</sup> He always rose after a short sleep at midnight, and continued in prayer on his knees with his hands lifted up to heaven till sunrise, and sometimes till three in the afternoon, as Palladius relates in his Lausiack history.

St Antony, in the year 339, saw in a vision, under the figure of mules kicking down the altar, the havoc which the Arian persecution made two years after in Alexandria, and clearly foretold it, as St Athanasius, St Jerom, and St Chrysostom assure us.<sup>4</sup> He would not speak to a heretic, unless to exhort him to the true faith; and he drove all such from his mountain, calling them venomous serpents.<sup>5</sup> At the request of the bishops, about the year 355, he took a journey to Alexandria to confound the Arians, preaching aloud in that city that God the Son is not a creature, but of the same substance with the Father; and that the impious Arians, who called him a creature, did not differ from the heathens themselves, "who worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." All the people ran to see him, and rejoiced to hear him; even the pagans, struck with the dignity of his character, flocked to him, saying, "We desire to see the man of God." He converted many, and wrought several miracles: St Athanasius conducted him back as far as the gates of the city, where he cured a girl possessed by the devil. Being desired by the

<sup>1</sup> Rosweide, lib. iii. c. 129; Cotelier, &c.

<sup>2</sup> St Nilus, ep. 24; Cotelier, Apoth. Patr. p. 340; Rosweide, Vit. Patr. lib. iii. c. 105, lib. v.

c. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Cassian, Collat. c. 31.

<sup>4</sup> St Athan. n. 82, p. 857; St Chrys. Hom. 8, in Mat. St Hier. ep. 16; Sozom. lib. vi. c. 5.

<sup>5</sup> St Athan. n. 68, 69, p. 847.

duke or general of Egypt to make a longer stay in the city than he had proposed, he answered: "As fish die if they leave the water, so does a monk if he forsakes his solitude."<sup>1</sup>

St Jerom and Rufin relate that at Alexandria he met with the famous Didymus, and told him that he ought not to regret much the loss of eyes, which were common to ants and flies, but to rejoice in the treasure of that interior light which the apostles enjoyed, and by which we see God, and kindle the fire of his love in our souls. Heathen philosophers, and others, often went to dispute with him, and always returned much astonished at his humility, meekness, sanctity, and extraordinary wisdom. He admirably proved to them the truth and security of the Christian religion, and confirmed it by miracles. "We," said he, "only by naming Jesus Christ crucified, put to flight those devils which you adore as gods; and where the sign of the cross is formed, magic and charms lose their power." At the end of this discourse he invoked Christ, and signed with the cross twice or thrice several persons possessed with devils; in the same moment they stood up sound and in their senses, giving thanks to God for his mercy in their regard.<sup>2</sup> When certain philosophers asked him how he could spend his time in solitude without the pleasure of reading books, he replied that nature was his great book, and amply supplied the want of others. When others, despising him as an illiterate man, came with the design to ridicule his ignorance, he asked them with great simplicity, which was first, reason or learning, and which had produced the other? The philosophers answered, "Reason, or good sense." "This, then," said Antony, "suffices." The philosophers went away astonished at the wisdom and dignity with which he prevented their objections. Some others demanding a reason of his faith in Christ, on purpose to insult it, he put them to silence by showing that they degraded the notion of the divinity by ascribing to it infamous human passions, but that the humiliation of the cross is the greatest demonstration of infinite goodness, and its ignominy appears the highest glory, by the triumphant resurrection, the miraculous raising of the dead, and curing of the blind and the sick. He then admirably proved that faith in God and his works is more clear and satisfactory than the sophistry of the Greeks. St Athanasius mentions that he disputed with these Greeks by an interpreter.<sup>3</sup> Our holy author assures us that no one visited St Antony under any affliction and sadness who did not return home full of comfort and joy; and he relates many miraculous cures wrought by him, also several heavenly visions and revelations with which he was favoured. Belacius, the duke or general of Egypt, persecuting the Catholics with extreme fury, St Antony, by a letter, exhorted him to leave the servants of Christ in peace. Belacius tore the letter, then spit and trampled upon it, and threatened to make the

<sup>1</sup> St Athan. n. 85, p. 859.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. n. 80, p. 855.

<sup>3</sup> N. 77, p. 852.

abbot the next victim of his fury; but five days after, as he was riding with Nestorius, governor of Egypt, their horses began to play and prance, and the governor's horse, though otherwise remarkably tame, by justling, threw Belacius from his horse, and by biting his thigh tore it in such a manner than the general died miserably on the third day.<sup>1</sup> About the year 337, *Constantine the Great* and his two sons, *Constantius* and *Constans*, wrote a joint letter to the saint, recommending themselves to his prayers, and desiring an answer. St Antony, seeing his monks surprised, said, without being moved, "Do not wonder that the emperor writes to us, one man to another; rather admire that God should have wrote to us, and that he has spoken to us by his Son." He said he knew not how to answer it: at last, through the importunity of his disciples, he penned a letter to the emperor and his sons, which St Athanasius has preserved; and in which he exhorts them to the contempt of the world, and the constant remembrance of the judgment to come. St Jerom mentions seven other letters of St Antony to divers monasteries, written in the style of the apostles, and filled with their maxims: several monasteries of Egypt possess them in the original Egyptian language. We have them in an obscure, imperfect, Latin translation from the Greek. He inculcates perpetual watchfulness against temptations, prayer, mortification, and humility.<sup>2</sup> He observes that as the devil fell by pride, so he assaults virtue in us principally by that temptation.<sup>3</sup> A maxim which he frequently repeats is, that the knowledge of ourselves is the necessary and only step by which we can ascend to the knowledge and love of God. The Bollandists<sup>4</sup> give us a short letter of St Antony to St Theodorus, Abbot of Tabenna, in which he says that God had assured him in a revelation that he showed mercy to all true adorers of Jesus Christ, though they should have fallen, if they sincerely repented of their sin. No ancients mention any monastic rule written by St Antony. His example and instructions have been the most perfect rule for the monastic life to all succeeding ages. It is related<sup>5</sup> that St Antony, hearing his disciples express their surprise at the great multitudes who embraced a monastic life, and applied themselves with incredible ardour to the most austere practices of virtue, told them with tears that the time would come when monks would be fond of living in cities and stately buildings, and of eating at dainty tables, and be only distinguished from persons of the world by their habit, but that still some among them would arise to the spirit of true perfection, whose crown would be so much the greater, as their virtue would be more difficult, amidst the contagion of bad example. In the discourses which this saint made to his monks, a rigorous self-examination upon all their actions, every evening, was a practice which he strongly

<sup>1</sup> N. 86, p. 86o.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 2. ad Arsinoitas.<sup>3</sup> Ibid.<sup>4</sup> Majj. t. iii. p. 355.<sup>5</sup> Rosweide, Vit. Patr. lib. v. c. 8; Abr. Eckellens. in Vit. St Ant. p. 106; Cotel. 344; Mart Coptor.

inculcated.<sup>1</sup> In an excellent sermon which he made to his disciples, recorded by St Athanasius,<sup>2</sup> he pathetically exhorts them to condemn the whole world for heaven, to spend every day as if they knew it to be the last of their lives, having death always before their eyes, continually to advance in fervour, and to be always armed against the assaults of Satan, whose weakness he shows at length. He extols the efficacy of the sign of the cross in chasing him and dissipating his illusions, and lays down rules for the discernment of spirits, the first of which is that the devil leaves in the soul impressions of fear, sadness, confusion, and disturbance.

St Antony performed the visitation of his monks a little before his death, which he foretold them with his last instructions; but no tears could move him to die among them. It appears from St Athanasius that the Christians had learned from the pagans their custom of embalming the bodies of the dead, which abuse, as proceeding from vanity and sometimes superstition, St Antony had often condemned: this he would prevent, and ordered that his body should be buried in the earth as the patriarchs were, and privately, on his mountain, by his two disciples, Macarius and Amathas, who had remained with him the last fifteen years, to serve him in his remote cell in his old age. He hastened back to that solitude, and some time after fell sick: he repeated to these two disciples his orders for their burying his body secretly in that place, adding, "In the day of the resurrection, I shall receive it incorruptible from the hand of Christ." He ordered them to give one of his sheep-skins, with a cloak in which he lay, to the Bishop Athanasius, as a public testimony of his being united in faith and communion with that holy prelate; to give his other sheep-skin to the Bishop Serapion; and to keep for themselves his sackcloth. He added, "Farewell, my children, Antony is departing, and will be no longer with you." At these words they embraced him, and he stretching out his feet, without any other sign, calmly ceased to breathe. His death happened in the year 356, probably on the 17th of January; on which the most ancient Martyrologies name him, and which the Greek empire kept as a holyday soon after his death. He was one hundred and five years old.

A most sublime gift of heavenly contemplation and prayer was the fruit of this great saint's holy retirement. But the foundation of his most ardent charity, and that sublime contemplation by which his soul soared in noble and lofty flights above all earthly things, was laid in the purity and disengagement of his affections, the contempt of the world, a most profound humility, and the universal mortification of his senses and of the powers of his soul. Hence flowed that constant tranquillity and serenity of his mind, which was the best proof of a perfect mastery of his passions. St Athanasius observes of him, that after thirty years spent in the closest

<sup>1</sup> St Athan. n. 55. p. 858.

<sup>2</sup> N. 16 and 43.



solitude, "he appeared not to others with a sullen or savage, but with a most obliging sociable air."<sup>1</sup> A heart that is filled with inward peace, simplicity, goodness, and charity is a stranger to a lowering or contracted look. The main point in Christian mortification is the humiliation of the heart, one of its principal ends being the subduing of the passions. Hence true virtue always increases the sweetness and gentleness of the mind, though this is attended with an invincible constancy, and an inflexible firmness in every point of duty. That devotion or self-denial is false or defective which betrays us into pride or uncharitableness; and whatever makes us sour, morose, or peevish makes us certainly worse, and instead of begetting in us a nearer resemblance of the divine nature, gives us a strong tincture of the temper of devils.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 17:*

ST ANTONY: ST GENULFUS or GENOU, Bishop of Cahors (?) about 250 (?): ST JULIAN SABAS, hermit, who lived in a cave, 377: ST MILDGYTHA, virgin, grand-daughter of Penda, King of Mercia: ST RICHIMIRUS, Abbot: BLESSED ROSELINA, a Carthusian nun who practised extreme mortification: ST SABINAS, Bishop of Piacenza, a friend of St Ambrose and a learned Confessor: SAINTS SPEUSIPPUS, ELEUSIPPUS, and MELEUSIPPUS, said to have been three (triplet) brothers, martyred with their grandmother, Leonilla, under Marcus Aurelius: and ST SULPICIOUS (ST SULPICE), second Bishop of Bourges, Confessor, who recited the Psalter every day, converted the whole Jewish population of Bourges to Christianity and gave up his bishopric so that he might have more time to care for the poor, to whom he was devoted from his youth. Patron of the Paris seminary which now bears his name.

## JANUARY 18

### ST PETER'S CHAIR AT ROME

[See Phæbeus, de Cathedrâ in quâ St Petrus Romæ sedit, & de antiquitate et præstantiâ solemnitate Cathedræ Romanæ. Romæ 1666, 8vo., also Chatelain, Notes on the Martyrology, p. 326.]

ST PETER having triumphed over the devil in the East, pursued him to Rome in the person of Simon Magus. He who had formerly trembled at the voice of a poor maid now feared not the very throne of idolatry and superstition. The capital of the empire of the world, and the centre of impiety, called for the zeal of the prince of the apostles. God had established the Roman empire, and extended its dominion beyond that of any former monarchy, for the more easy propagation of his gospel. Its metropolis was of the greatest importance for this enterprise. St Peter took that province upon himself; and repairing to Rome, there preached the faith and established his episcopal chair, whose *successors* the bishops of Rome have been accounted in all ages. That St Peter founded that church by his *preaching* is expressly asserted by Caius,<sup>2</sup> a priest of Rome under Pope Zephyrinus; who relates also that *his body was then on the Vatican Hill*, and that of his fellow-labourer St Paul on the Ostian Road. That he and St Paul planted the faith at Rome, and were both crowned with

<sup>1</sup> St Athan. n. 67, p. 847, and n. 73, p. 850.

<sup>2</sup> Apud Eus. lib. ii. c. 24, alias 25.

martyrdom at the same time, is affirmed by Dionysius,<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Corinth, in the second age. St Irenæus,<sup>2</sup> who lived in the same age, calls the church at Rome "the greatest and most ancient church, founded by the two glorious apostles, Peter and Paul." Eusebius, in several places,<sup>3</sup> mentions St Peter's being at Rome, and the several important translations of this apostle in that city. Not to mention Origen,<sup>4</sup> Hegesippus,<sup>5</sup> Arnobius,<sup>6</sup> St Ambrose,<sup>7</sup> St Austin,<sup>8</sup> St Jerom,<sup>9</sup> St Optatus,<sup>10</sup> Orosius,<sup>11</sup> and others on the same subject.<sup>12</sup> St Cyprian<sup>13</sup> calls Rome the *chair* of St Peter (as Theodoret<sup>14</sup> calls it his *throne*), which the general councils and ecclesiastical writers, through every age and on every occasion, repeat. That St Peter at least preached in Rome, founded that church, and died there by martyrdom under Nero are facts the most incontestable by the testimony of all writers of different countries who lived near that time; persons of unquestionable veracity, and who could not but be informed of the truth in a point so interesting, and of its own nature so public and notorious, as to leave them no possibility of a mistake. This is also attested by monuments of every kind; also by the prerogatives, rights, and privileges which that church enjoyed from those early ages in consequence of this title.

It was an ancient custom, as Cardinal Baronius<sup>15</sup> and Thomassin<sup>16</sup> show by many examples, observed by churches to keep an annual festival of the consecration of their bishops. The feast of the chair of St Peter is found in ancient Martyrologies, as in one under the name of St Jerom, at Esternach, copied in the time of St Willibrord, in 720. Christians justly celebrate the founding of this mother-church, the centre of catholic communion, in thanksgiving to God for his mercies on his church, and to implore his future blessings.

Christ has taught us, in the divine model of prayer which he has delivered to us, that we are bound to recommend to him, before all other things, the exaltation of his own honour and glory, and to beg that the kingdom of his holy grace and love be planted in all hearts. If we love God above all things, and with our whole hearts, or have any true charity for our neighbour, this will be the centre of all our desires, that God be loved and served by all his creatures, and that he be glorified, in the most perfect manner, in our own souls. By placing this at the head of our requests, we shall most strongly engage God to crown all our just and holy desires. As one of his greatest mercies to his church, we most earnestly

<sup>1</sup> Apud Eus. lib. ii. c. 24, alias 25.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. iii. c. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. ii. c. 13 and 15, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Apud Eus. lib. iii. c. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Lib. de Excid. Hier. c. 1 and 3.

<sup>6</sup> Lib. iii.

<sup>7</sup> Ser. de Basilicis.

<sup>8</sup> Lib. de Hæres. c. 1, &c.

<sup>9</sup> Lib. xvii. ad. Marcell.

<sup>10</sup> Adv. Parm.

<sup>11</sup> Lib. vii. c. 1.

<sup>12</sup> The general opinion with Eusebius, St Jerom, and the Roman calendar fixes the first arrival of St Peter at Rome in the second year of Claudius. If this date be true, the apostle returned into the East soon after; for he was imprisoned in Judæa by Agrippa in the year of Christ 43. Lactantius does not mention this first coming of St Peter to Rome, but only the second, saying that he came to Rome in the reign of Nero, who put him and St Paul to death. Lib. de Mort. Persec. n. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ep. 55, ad Cornel. pap.

<sup>14</sup> Lib. ii. c. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Notæ. in Martyr.

<sup>16</sup> Tr. des Fêtes, lib. ii. c. 10.

beseech him to raise up in it zealous pastors, eminently replenished with his Spirit, with which he animated his apostles.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 18 :*

BLESSED CHRISTINA CICCARELLI, virgin, 1543, renowned for her penances and her love for the poor : ST DEICOLUS, Abbot. In Irish Dicuil and called by the French Desle ; he left Ireland with St Columban, who once asked him why he was always smiling. " Because no one can take my God from me," said the holy youth ; died in the seventh century : ST PETER'S CHAIR AT ROME : ST PRISCA, a Roman virgin believed to have known St Peter and to have been martyred in the first century ; others, however, place her in the third century : ST ULFRID, an Englishman of great learning, who converted many to Christ, first in Germany and later in Sweden. In 1028, preaching against Thor and hewing his idol down with a hatchet, he was killed by the pagans : ST VOLUSIANUS occupied the see of Tours for some eight years (496).

## JANUARY 19

### ST WULSTAN, BISHOP OF WORCESTER, C.

HE was a native of Icentum, in Warwickshire. In his youth, perceiving himself somewhat touched with wanton love on seeing a woman dance, he withdrew into a thicket hard by, and, lying prostrate, bewailed his fault before God with very great contrition. And he was endowed from that time by Almighty God with the gift of such a constant watchfulness over his senses as prevented his being evermore annoyed with the like temptations. He laid the foundation of his studies and education in the Monastery of Evesham, but completed the same at Peterborough. His parents having, by mutual consent, taken the monastic habit at Worcester ; his father, Athelstan, in the great monastery of men ; and his mother, Wulfgeva, in a nunnery : St Wulstan put himself under the direction of Brithege, Bishop of Worcester, by whom he was advanced to the holy orders of priesthood. In this station he redoubled his ardour for prayer, and practised greater austerities in the world than monks in their convents. At first he allowed himself the use of flesh ; but being one day distracted in saying mass by the smell of meat that was roasting in the kitchen, he bound himself by vow never more to eat any flesh. Not long after he entered himself a novice in the great abbey at Worcester, where he was remarkable for the innocence and sanctity of his life. The first charge with which he was intrusted in the monastery was the care of instructing the children. He was afterwards made precentor, and then treasurer of the church. In these two last stations he devoted himself totally to prayer, and watched whole nights in the church. As the meanest employments were always the object of his love and choice, it was contrary to his inclination that he was made Prior of Worcester, and, in 1062, bishop of that see, when Aldred was translated to that of York. Though not very learned, he delivered the word of God with so much dignity and unction as often to move his whole audience to tears. He always recited the psalter whilst he travelled, and never passed by any church or chapel without going in to pour forth his soul before the altar with tears, which

seemed to stand always ready in his eyes for prayer. When the Conqueror had deprived the English, both nobility and clergy, of the posts of honour they possessed in the church and state, in favour of his Normans, on whose fidelity he could depend, Wulstan kept his see, though not without a miracle, as St Aelred, Florentius, and Capgrave relate as follows: In a synod held at Westminster, in which Archbishop Lanfranc presided, Wulstan was called upon to give up his crosier and ring upon pretext of his simplicity and unfitness for business. The saint confessed himself unfit for the charge, but said that King Edward, with the concurrence of the apostolic see, had compelled him to take it upon him, and that he would deliver his crosier to him. Then going to the king's monument, he fixed his crosier in the stone, then went and sat down among the monks. No one was able to draw out the crosier till the saint was ordered to take it again, and it followed his hand with ease. From this time the Conqueror treated him with honour. Lanfranc even commissioned him to perform the visitation of the diocese of Chester for himself. When any English complained of the oppression of the Normans, he used to tell them, "This is a scourge of God for your sins, which you must bear with patience." The saint caused the young gentlemen who were brought up under his care to carry in the dishes and wait on the poor at table, to teach them the practice of humiliation, in which he set the most edifying example. He showed the most tender charity for penitents, and often wept over them whilst they confessed their sins to him. He died in 1095, having sat thirty-two years, and lived about eighty-seven. He was canonised in 1203. See his life, by William of Malmesbury, in Wharton, t. ii. p. 244. Also a second, by Florence of Worcester, and a third in Capgrave; and his history at length, by Dr Thomas, in his "History of the Cathedral of Worcester."<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 19 :*

BLESSED ANDREW OF PESCHIERA, Confessor : BLESSED BERNARD OF CORLEONE : ST CANUTUS or KNUT, King of Denmark, martyr : ST GERMANICUS, martyred in 156. He provoked the wild beasts in the arena to attack him, so that he might be the sooner delivered from the ungodly companionship in which he found himself : ST LOMER or Launomar, Abbot (about 590). He was a shepherd boy, afterwards ordained. Many gathered around his hermitage because of his spirit of prayer and gift of miracles. SAINTS MARIUS, MARTHA, AUDIFAX, and ABACHUM, the first-named two being husband and wife and the two last their sons. Being converted they came from Persia, leaving their fortune to the poor, to Rome, where they gathered the ashes of Christian martyrs under Aurelian and buried them with respect. For this they were apprehended, the three men being beheaded and St Martha being drowned at a place now called Santa Ninfa, near Rome : SAINT NATHALAN, Bishop : ST REGIMIUS, Bishop of Rouen : BLESSED THOMAS OF CORI : and ST WULSTAN (or WULFSTAN ?).

JANUARY 20

ST FABIAN, POPE, M.

(A.D. 250)

[See Tillemont, t. iii. p. 362.]

HE succeeded St Anterus in the pontificate in the year 236. Eusebius relates that in an assembly of the people and clergy, held for the election

<sup>1</sup> Hist lib. vi. c. 28.

of a pastor in his room, a dove, unexpectedly appearing, settled, to the great surprise of all present, on the head of St Fabian, and that this miraculous sign united the votes of the clergy and people in promoting him, though not thought of before, as being a layman and a stranger. He governed the church sixteen years, sent St Dionysius and other preachers into Gaul, and condemned Privatus, a broacher of a new heresy in Africa, as appears from St Cyprian.<sup>1</sup> St Fabian died a glorious martyr in the persecution of Decius, in 250, as St Cyprian and St Jerom witness. The former, writing to his successor, St Cornelius, calls him an incomparable man, and says that the glory of his death had answered the purity and holiness of his life.<sup>2</sup>

The saints made God, and the accomplishment of his holy will, the great object of all their petitions in their prayers, and their only aim in all their actions. "God," says St Austin,<sup>3</sup> "in his promises to hear our prayers, is desirous to bestow himself upon us; if you find any thing better than him, ask it, but if you ask any thing beneath him, you put an affront upon him, and hurt yourself by preferring to him a creature which he framed: pray in the spirit and sentiment of love, in which the royal prophet said to him, 'Thou, O Lord, art my portion.'<sup>4</sup> Let others choose to themselves portions among creatures; for my part, Thou art my portion, Thee alone I have chosen for my whole inheritance."

## ST SEBASTIAN, M.

(A.D. 283)

[From his acts, written before the end of the fourth age. The gladiators, who were abolished by Honorius in 403, subsisted when these acts were compiled. See Bollandus, who thinks St Ambrose wrote them; also Tillemont, t. iv. p. 551.]

ST SEBASTIAN was born at Narbonne, in Gaul, but his parents were of Milan, in Italy, and he was brought up in that city. He was a fervent servant of Christ, and though his natural inclinations gave him an aversion to a military life, yet to be better able, without suspicion, to assist the confessors and martyrs in their sufferings, he went to Rome and entered the army under the emperor Carinus about the year 283. It happened that the martyrs, Marcus and Marcellianus, under sentence of death, appeared in danger of being shaken in their faith by the tears of their friends: Sebastian seeing this, stepped in and made them a long exhortation to constancy, which he delivered with the holy fire that strongly affected all his hearers. Zoë, the wife of Nicostratus, having for six years lost the use of speech by a palsy in her tongue, fell at his feet, and spoke distinctly, by the saint making the sign of the cross on her mouth. She, with her

<sup>1</sup> Cypr. Ep. 30, Ed. Pam.  
<sup>2</sup> St Aug. Conc. I, in Ps. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 44, ad Corn.  
<sup>4</sup> Ps. lxxii. 26.

husband Nicostratus, who was master of the rolls,<sup>1</sup> the parents of Marcus and Marcellianus, the jailer Claudius, and sixteen other prisoners, were converted; and Nicostratus, who had charge of the prisoners, took them to his own house, where Polycarp, a holy priest, instructed and baptized them. Chromatius, governor of Rome, being informed of this, and that Tranquillinus, the father of SS. Marcus and Marcellianus, had been cured of the gout by receiving baptism, desired to be instructed in the faith, being himself grievously afflicted with the same distemper. Accordingly, having sent for Sebastian, he was cured by him, and baptized with his son Tiburtius. He then enlarged the converted prisoners, made his slaves free, and resigned his prefectship.

Chromatius, with the emperor's consent, retired into the country in Campania, taking many new converts along with him. It was a contest of zeal, out of a mutual desire of martyrdom, between St Sebastian and the priest Polycarp, which of them should accompany this troop, to complete their instruction, and which should remain in the city to encourage and assist the martyrs, which latter was the more dangerous province. St Austin wished to see such contests of charity amongst the ministers of the church.<sup>2</sup> Pope Caius, who was appealed to, judged it most proper that Sebastian should stay in Rome as a defender of the church. In the year 286, the persecution growing hot, the pope and others concealed themselves in the imperial palace, as a place of the greatest safety, in the apartments of one Castulus, a Christian officer of the court. St Zoë was first apprehended, praying at St Peter's tomb on the feast of the apostles. She was stifled with smoke, being hung by the heels over a fire. Tranquillinus, ashamed to be less courageous than a woman, went to pray at the tomb of St Paul, and was seized by the populace and stoned to death. Nicostratus, Claudius, Castorius, and Victorinus were taken, and, after having been thrice tortured, were thrown into the sea. Tiburtius, betrayed by a false brother, was beheaded. Castulus, accused by the same wretch, was thrice put on the rack, and afterwards buried alive. Marcus and Marcellianus were nailed by the feet to a post, and having remained in that torment twenty-four hours, were shot to death by arrows.

St Sebastian, having sent so many martyrs to heaven before him, was himself impeached before the Emperor Diocletian, who, having grievously reproached him with ingratitude, delivered him over to certain archers of Mauritania, to be shot to death. His body was covered with arrows, and he left for dead. Irene, the widow of St Castulus, going to bury him, found him still alive, and took him to her lodgings, where, by care, he recovered of his wounds, but refused to fly, and even placed himself one day by a staircase where the emperor was to pass, whom he first accosted, reproaching him for his unjust cruelties against the Christians. This

<sup>1</sup> Primiscrinus.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 180.

freedom of speech, and from a person, too, whom he supposed to have been dead, greatly astonished the emperor; but, recovering from his surprise, he gave orders for his being seized and beat to death with cudgels, and his body thrown into the common sewer. A pious lady, called Lucina, admonished by the martyr in a vision, got it privately removed, and buried it in the catacombs at the entrance of the cemetery of Calixtus. A church was afterwards built over his relics by Pope Damasus, which is one of the seven ancient stationary churches at Rome, but not one of the seven principal churches of that city, as some moderns mistake; it neither being one of the five patriarchal churches, nor one of the seventy-two old churches which give titles to cardinals. Vandelbert, St Ado, Eginard, Sigebert, and other contemporary authors relate that, in the reign of Louis Debonnair, Pope Eugenius II gave the body of St Sebastian to Hilduin, Abbot of St Denys, who brought it into France, and it was deposited at St Medard's, at Soissons, on the 9th of December, in 826. With it is said to have been brought a considerable portion of the relics of St Gregory the Great. The rich shrines of SS. Sebastian, Gregory, and Medard were plundered by the Calvinists in 1564, and the sacred bones thrown into a ditch, in which there was water. Upon the declaration of two eye-witnesses, they were afterwards found by the Catholics, and in 1578 enclosed in three new shrines, though the bones of the three saints could not be distinguished from each other.<sup>1</sup> The head of this martyr, which was given to St Willibrord by Pope Sergius, is kept at Esternach, in the duchy of Luxemburg. Portions of his relics are shown in the cathedral at St Victor's; the Theatins and Minims at Paris; in four churches at Mantua; at Malacca, Seville, Toulouse; Munich in the ducal palace; Tournay in the cathedral; Antwerp in the Church of the Jesuits; and at Brussels in the chapel of the court, not at St Gudule's, as some have mistaken.<sup>2</sup> St Sebastian has been always honoured by the church as one of her most illustrious martyrs. We read in Paul the deacon in what manner, in the year 680, Rome was freed from a raging pestilence by the patronage of this saint. Milan in 1575, Lisbon in 1599, and other places, have experienced in like calamities the effects of his intercession with God in their behalf.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 20 :*

BLESSED BENEDICT RICASOLI, aspiring after greater perfection than seemed possible in community life, retired to a miserable hut at some distance from the Benedictine Abbey he had entered. Returning from time to time, he exhorted the monks to fervour and perseverance. He was found dead in his hut, his brethren summoned by the ringing of the monastery bell without human agency; he was kneeling in the act of prayer: BLESSED DIDIER or Desiderius, said to have been the thirty-third Bishop of Therouanne: St EUTHYMIUS, Abbot, whose birth said to be an answer to his parents' prayers (473), and whom the Greeks style "the Great": SAINTS FABIAN and SEBASTIAN: and St FECHIN or Vigeanus, Abbot, 665.

<sup>1</sup> Chatelain, notes, p. 355; Baillet.

<sup>2</sup> Bollandus; Chatel. *ibid*.

JANUARY 21

ST AGNES, V. M.

(A.D. 304 or 305)

[The following relation is taken from Prudentius, de Coron. hym. 14, St Ambrose, lib. i. de Virgin, and Offic. lib. i. c. 41, and other fathers. Her acts are as ancient as the seventh century, but not sufficiently authentic; nor are those given us in Chaldaic by Stephen Assemani of a better stamp; they contradict St Ambrose and Prudentius in supposing that she finished her martyrdom by fire. See Tillemont, t. v.]

ST JEROM says<sup>1</sup> that the tongues and pens of all nations are employed in the praises of this saint, who overcame both the cruelty of the tyrant and the tenderness of her age, and crowned the glory of chastity with that of martyrdom. St Austin observes<sup>2</sup> that her name signifies chaste in Greek, and a lamb in Latin. She has always been looked upon in the church as a special patroness of purity, with the Immaculate Mother of God and St Thecla. Rome was the theatre of the triumph of St Agnes; and Prudentius says that her tomb was shown within sight of that city. She suffered not long after the beginning of the persecution of Diocletian, whose bloody edicts appeared in March, in the year of our Lord 303. We learn from St Ambrose and St Austin that she was only thirteen years of age at the time of her glorious death. Her riches and beauty excited the young noblemen of the first families in Rome to vie with one another in their addresses who should gain her in marriage.<sup>3</sup> Agnes answered them all that she had consecrated her virginity to a heavenly spouse, who could not be beheld by mortal eyes. Her suitors, finding her resolution impregnable to all their arts and importunities, accused her to the governor as a Christian, not doubting but threats and torments would overcome her tender mind, on which allurements could make no impression. The judge at first employed the mildest expression and most inviting promises, to which Agnes paid no regard, repeating always that she could have no other spouse than Jesus Christ. He then made use of threats, but found her soul endowed with a masculine courage, and even desirous of racks and death. At last terrible fires were made, and iron hooks, racks, and other instruments of torture, displayed before her, with threats of immediate execution. The young virgin surveyed them all with an undaunted eye, and with a cheerful countenance beheld the fierce and cruel executioners surrounding her, and ready to dispatch her at the word of command. She was so far from betraying the least symptom of fear that she even expressed her joy at the sight, and offered herself to the rack. She was then dragged before the idols and commanded to offer incense, "but could by no means be compelled to move her hand, except to make the sign of the cross," says St Ambrose.

The governor seeing his measures ineffectual, said he would send her

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 8.<sup>2</sup> Serm. 274.<sup>3</sup> St Ambrose, lib. i.; Virgin.





SAINT AGNES  
Virg et Mart

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In this picture Agnes is holding a little white lamb and a palm. *Agnes*, which means lamb, may have given the artist the idea because it sounds so like her name "Agnes." In her church in Rome two white lambs are blessed at the altar rails every year on her feast day, and from their wool is woven the pallia which rest on the altar in the "Confession" at St. Peter's.

to a house of prostitution, where what she prized so highly should be exposed to the insults of the debauchees.<sup>1</sup> Agnes answered that Jesus Christ was too jealous of the purity of his spouses to suffer it to be violated in such a manner, for he was their defender and protector. "You may," said she, "stain your sword with my blood, but will never be able to profane my body, consecrated to Christ." The governor was so incensed at this that he ordered her to be immediately led to the public brothel, with liberty to all persons to abuse her person at pleasure. Many young profligates ran thither, full of the wicked desire of gratifying their lust, but were seized with such awe at the sight of the saint that they durst not approach her—one only excepted, who, attempting to be rude to her, was that very instant, by a flash, as it were, of lightning from heaven, struck blind, and fell trembling to the ground. His companions, terrified, took him up and carried him to Agnes, who was at a distance, singing hymns of praise to Christ, her protector. The virgin by prayer restored him to his sight and health.

The chief prosecutor of the saint, who at first sought to gratify his lust and avarice, now laboured to satiate his revenge by incensing the judge against her, his passionate fondness being changed into anger and rage. The governor wanted not others to spur him on, for he was highly exasperated to see himself baffled and set at defiance by one of her tender age and sex. Therefore, resolved upon her death, he condemned her to be beheaded. Agnes, transported with joy on hearing this sentence, and still more at the sight of the executioner, "went to the place of execution more cheerfully," says St Ambrose, "than others go to their wedding." The executioner had secret instructions to use all means to induce her to a compliance, but Agnes always answered she could never offer so great an injury to her heavenly spouse, and, having made a short prayer, bowed down her neck to adore God, and received the stroke of death. The spectators wept to see so beautiful and tender a virgin loaded with fetters, and to behold her fearless under the very sword of the executioner, who with a trembling hand cut off her head at one stroke. Her body was buried at a small distance from Rome, near the Nomentan Road. A church was built on the spot in the time of Constantine the Great, and was repaired by Pope Honorius in the seventh century. It is now in the hands of Canon-Regulares, standing without the walls of Rome, and is honoured with her relics in a very rich silver shrine, the gift of Pope Paul V, in whose time they were found in this church, together with those of St Emerentiana. The other beautiful rich church of St Agnes, within the city, built by Pope Innocent X (the right of patronage being vested in the family of Pamphili), stands on the place where her chastity was exposed.

<sup>1</sup> Prudentius ; St Ambrose.

The feast of St Agnes is mentioned in all Martyrologies, both of the East and West, though on different days. It was formerly a holyday for the women in England, as appears from the Council of Worcester, held in the year 1240. St Ambrose, St Austin, and other fathers have wrote her panegyric. St Martin of Tours was singularly devout to her. Thomas-à-Kempis honoured her as his special patroness, as his works declare in many places. He relates many miracles wrought and graces received through her intercession.

Marriage is a holy state, instituted by God, and in the order of providence and nature the general or more ordinary state of those who live in the world. Those, therefore, who upon motives of virtue, and in a Christian and holy manner, engage in this state, do well. Those, nevertheless, who, for the sake of practising more perfect virtue, by a divine call, prefer a state of perpetual virginity, embrace that which is more perfect and more excellent. Dr Wells, a learned Protestant, confesses that Christ<sup>1</sup> declares voluntary chastity, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, to be an excellency, and an excellent state of life.<sup>2</sup> This is also the manifest inspired doctrine of St Paul;<sup>3</sup> and in the revelations of St John<sup>4</sup> spotless virgins are called, in a particular manner, the companions of the Lamb, and are said to enjoy the singular privilege of following him wherever he goes. The tradition of the church has always been unanimous in this point; and among the Romans, Greeks, Syrians, and barbarians many holy virgins joyfully preferred torments and death to the violation of their integrity, which they bound themselves by vow to preserve without defilement in mind or body. The fathers, from the very disciples of the apostles, are all profuse in extolling the excellency of holy virginity, as a special fruit of the incarnation of Christ, his divine institution, and a virtue which has particular charms in the eyes of God, who delights in chaste minds, and chooses to dwell singularly in them. They often repeat that purity raises men, even in this mortal life, to the dignity of angels—purifies the soul, fits it for a more perfect love of God, and a closer application to heavenly things, and disengages the mind and heart from worldly thoughts and affections: it produces in the soul the nearest resemblance to God. Chastity is threefold—that of virgins, that of widows, and that of married persons; in each state it will receive its crown, as St Ambrose observes,<sup>5</sup> but in the first is most perfect, so that St Austin calls it fruit a hundredfold, and that of marriage sixtyfold; but the more excellent this virtue is, and the higher its glory and reward, the more heroic and the more difficult is its victory; nor is it perfect unless it be embellished with all

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8, 25, 27, 32, 38.

<sup>3</sup> St Ambrose, lib. de Viduis, t. v. p. 635.

<sup>4</sup> Wells, Paraphrase on St Matthew, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Apoc. xiv. 1, 3, 4, 5.

other virtues in a heroic degree, especially divine charity and the most profound humility.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 21 :*

ST AGNES : ST EPIPHANIUS, Bishop of Pavia, who by his eloquence tamed savage barbarians, won life and liberty for whole armies of captives, and secured the abolition of oppressive taxes ; for he was powerful with the weak Roman emperors of his time : ST FRUCTUOSUS AND COMPANION MARTYRS. This saint was Bishop of Tarragona and was arrested while in bed. In gaol he blessed those who visited him, baptized a catechumen, kept the fast of the Stations and, when brought before the governor with his heroic companions and asked to sacrifice to the gods, answered : " I adore one God, who made heaven and earth." The martyrs were burned to death with arms extended in the form of a cross : BLESSED INEZ DE BENIGANIM, virgin : ST MEINRAD, hermit and martyr : ST PATROCLUS, martyr : the BLESSED EDWARD STRANSHAM, 1557-1586, English martyr, beatified 1929. He had a great influence on young men, and part of his vocation seems to have been the discerning and guiding those who believed themselves called to serve the altar : ST VINIM or WYNNIN, or GWYNNIN, Bishop and Confessor in Scotland : and another English martyr, BLESSED NICHOLAS WOODFEN, priest (?-1586), condemned for treason for being made a seminary priest at Rheims ; a man of fine appearance and great courtesy, who suffered at Tyburn with remarkable constancy on this date, in 1586.

JANUARY 22

ST ANASTASIUS, MARTYR

(A.D. 628)

[From his genuine acts, which are commended in the seventh general council, about one hundred and sixty years after his death.]

ST ANASTASIUS was a trophy of the holy cross of Christ, when it was carried away into Persia by Chosroës, in the year 614, after he had taken and plundered Jerusalem. The martyr was a Persian, son of a Magian, instructed in the sciences of that sect, and a young soldier in the Persian troops. Upon hearing of the news of the taking of the cross by his king, he became very inquisitive concerning the Christian religion ; and its sublime truths made such an impression on his mind that, being returned into Persia from an expedition into the Roman empire, he left the army with his brother, who also served in it, and retired to Hierapolis. In that city he lodged with a devout Persian Christian, a silversmith, with whom he went often to prayer. The holy pictures which he saw moved him exceedingly, and gave him occasion to inquire daily more into our faith, and to admire the courage of the martyrs whose glorious sufferings were painted in the churches. At length, desirous of baptism, he left Hierapolis, which city was subject to the Persians, and went to Jerusalem, where he received that sacrament by the hands of Modestus, who governed that church as vicar during the absence of the patriarch Zachary, whom Chosroës had led away captive into Persia. In baptism he changed his Persian name Magundat into that of Anastasius, meaning, according to the signification of that Greek word, that he was risen from death to a new and spiritual life. He had prepared himself with wonderful devotion for that sacrament whilst a catechumen, and he spent in no less fervour the several days after it, which persons baptized passed in white garments, in prayer and in

receiving more perfect instructions in the faith. At the end of this term, Anastasius, the more easily and more perfectly to keep inviolably his sacred baptismal vows and obligations, desired to become a monk in a monastery five miles distant from Jerusalem. Justin, the abbot, made him first learn the Greek tongue and the psalter; then, cutting off his hair, gave him the monastic habit in the year 621.

After seven years spent in great perfection in this monastery, his desire of martyrdom daily increasing, and having been assured by a revelation that his prayers for that grace were heard, he left that house and visited the places of devotion in Palestine, at Diospolis, Garizim, and our Lady's church at Cæsarea, where he stayed two days. This city, with the greatest part of Syria, was then subject to the Persians. The saint, seeing certain Persian soothsayers of the garrison occupied in their abominable superstitions in the streets, boldly spoke to them, remonstrating against the impiety of such practices. The Persian magistrates apprehended him as a suspected spy; but he informed them that he once enjoyed the dignity of Magian with them, and had renounced it to become a humble follower of Christ. Upon this confession he was thrown into a dungeon, where he lay three days without eating or drinking till the return of Marzabanes, the governor, to the city. Being interrogated by him, he confessed his conversion to the faith, and equally despised his offers of great preferments and his threats of crucifying him. Marzabanes commanded him to be chained by the foot to another criminal, and his neck and one foot to be also linked together by a heavy chain, and condemned him in this condition to carry stones. The executioners were preparing themselves to bind him fast on the ground; but the saint told them it was unnecessary, for he had courage enough to lie down under the punishment without moving, and he regarded it as his greatest happiness and pleasure to suffer for Christ. He only begged leave to put off his monk's habit, lest it should be treated with contempt, which only his body deserved. He therefore laid it aside in a respectful manner, and then stretched himself on the ground, and without being bound did not stir all the time of the cruel torment, bearing it without changing his posture. The governor again threatened him to acquaint the king of his obstinacy: "Whom ought we rather to fear," said Anastasius, "a mortal man, or God, who made all things out of nothing?" The judge pressed him to sacrifice to fire, and to the sun and moon. The saint answered he could never acknowledge as gods creatures which God had made only for our use; upon which he was remanded to prison.

His old abbot hearing of his sufferings, sent two monks to assist him, and ordered prayers for him. The confessor, after carrying stones all the day, spent the greatest part of the night in prayer, to the surprise of his companions: one of whom, a Jew, saw and showed him to others at

prayer in the night, shining in brightness and glory like a blessed spirit, and angels praying with him. As the confessor was chained to a man condemned for a public crime, he prayed always with his neck bowed downwards, keeping his chained foot near his companion not to disturb him. Marzabanes in the meantime having informed Chosroës, and received his orders, acquainted the martyr by a messenger, without seeing him, that the king would be satisfied on condition he would only by word of mouth abjure the Christian faith: after which he might choose whether he would be an officer in the king's service or still remain a Christian and a monk; adding, he might in his heart always adhere to Christ provided that he would but for once renounce him in words privately, in his presence, "in which there could be no harm, nor any great injury to his Christ," as he said. Anastasius answered firmly that he would never even seem to dissemble, or to deny his God. In the meantime, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, the 14th of September, at the request of the Comercarius, or tax-gatherer for the king, who was a Christian of distinction, Anastasius had leave to go to the church and assist at the divine service. His presence and exhortations encouraged the faithful, excited the tepid to fervour, and moved all to tears. He dined that day with the Comercarius, and then returned with joy to his prison. On the day appointed, the martyr left Cæsarea, in Palestine, with two other Christian prisoners, under a strict guard, and was followed by one of the monks whom the abbot had sent to assist and encourage him. The acts of his martyrdom were written by this monk. He wrote from Hierapolis, and again from the river Tigris to his abbot, begging the prayers of his brethren.

Being arrived at Barsaloe in Assyria, six miles from Discartha or Dastagerde, near the Euphrates, where the king then was, the prisoners were thrown into a dungeon till his pleasure was known. An officer came from Chosroës to interrogate the saint, who made answer, with regard to his magnificent promises, in these words, "My religious habit and poor clothes show that I despise from my heart the gaudy pomp of the world. The honours and riches of a king, who must shortly die himself, are no temptation to me." Next day the officer returned to the prison, and endeavoured to intimidate him by blustering threats and reproaches. But the saint said calmly: "My lord judge, do not give yourself so much trouble about me. By the grace of Christ I am not to be moved: so execute your pleasure without more ado." The officer caused him to be unmercifully beaten with staves, after the Persian manner, insulting him all the time, and often repeating that because he contemned the king's bounty he should be treated in that manner every day as long as he lived. This punishment was inflicted on him three days; on the third the judge commanded him to be laid on his back, and a heavy beam pressed down

by the weight of two men on his legs, crushing the flesh to the very bone. The martyr's tranquillity and patience astonished the officer, who went again to acquaint the king of his behaviour. In his absence the gaoler, being a Christian by profession, though too weak to resign his place rather than detain such a prisoner, gave every one free access to the martyr. The Christians immediately filled the prison; every one sought to kiss his feet or chains, and kept as relics whatever had been sanctified by their touch; they also overlaid his fetters with wax, in order to receive their impression. The saint, with confusion and indignation, strove to hinder them, and expressed how extremely dissatisfied he was with such actions. The officer returning from the king caused him to be beaten again, which the confessor bore rather as a statue than as flesh and blood. Then he was hung up for two hours by one hand, with a great weight at his feet, and tampered with by threats and promises. The judge despairing to overcome him, went back to the king for his last orders, which were that he and all the Christian captives should be put to death. He returned speedily to put them in execution, and caused Anastasius's two companions, with three score and six other Christians, to be strangled one after another, on the banks of the river, before his face, whom the judge, all the time, pressed to return to the Persian worship, and to escape so disgraceful a death, promising, in case of compliance, that he should be made one of the greatest men in the court. Anastasius, with his eyes lifted up to heaven, gave thanks to God for bringing his life to so happy a conclusion; and said he expected that he should have met with a more cruel death in the torture of all his members: but seeing God granted him one so easy, he embraced with joy that end of a life which he otherwise must shortly have lost in a more painful manner. He was accordingly strangled, and after his death his head was cut off. This was in the year 628, the seventeenth of the Emperor Heraclius, on the 22nd of January, on which day both the Latins and Greeks keep his festival. His body, among the other dead, was exposed to be devoured by dogs, but it was the only one they left untouched. It was afterwards redeemed by the Christians, who laid it in the monastery of St Sergius, a mile from the place of his triumph, in the city Barsaloe, called afterwards from that monastery, Sergiopolis. The monk that attended him brought back his Colobium, or linen tunic without sleeves. The saint's body was afterwards brought into Palestine. Some years after it was removed to Constantinople, and lastly to Rome.

The seventh general council<sup>1</sup> proves the use of pious pictures from the head of this holy martyr, and his miraculous image, then kept at Rome with great veneration: where it is still preserved in the church belonging to the monastery of our Lady ad Aquas Sylvias, which now bears the name of SS. Vincent and Anastasius.<sup>2</sup> The rest of his relics are repositied

<sup>1</sup> Act. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Mabill, Iter Ital. p. 141.

in the holy chapel ad Scalas Sanctas, near St John Lateran. See the history of many miracles wrought by them, in Bollandus. St Anastasius foretold the speedy fall of the tyrant Chosroës: and ten days after his martyrdom the emperor Heraclius entered Persia.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 22 :*

ST ANASTASIUS: ST BLÆSILLA, widow: ST BRIEWOLD, Bishop and Confessor: ST DOMINIC OF SORA, Abbot: and ST VINCENT, a young martyr under Dacien, governor of Spain (304). Vincent was taught by St Valerius, Bishop of Saragossa, who ordained him deacon at an early age. Vincent suffered terrible tortures, preserving through all such peace in his words and gestures as astonished his tormentors. Being asked to compromise, for the last time, he walked with joy to the torture—fire upon a kind of gridiron. After this he was thrown into a dungeon, where God sent angels to console him. The gaoler, seeing the prison filled with light and the saint praising God, was converted on the spot. The saint was no sooner laid up upon a soft bed than he immediately expired. His cultus spread widely through the Christian world at a very early date.

### JANUARY 23

## ST JOHN THE ALMONER, C., PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA

HE received his surname from his profuse almsdeeds; was nobly descended, very rich, and a widower, at Amathus, in Cyprus, where, having buried all his children, he employed the whole income of his estate in the relief of the poor, and was no less remarkable for his great piety. The reputation of his sanctity raised him to the patriarchal chair of Alexandria about the year 608, at which time he was upwards of fifty years of age. On his arrival in that city he ordered an exact list to be taken of his masters. Being asked who these were, his answer was, "The Poor!"—namely, on account of their great interest in the court of heaven in behalf of their benefactors.<sup>1</sup> Their number amounted to seven thousand five hundred, whom he took under his special protection and furnished with all necessaries. He prepared himself by this action to receive the fulness of grace in his consecration. On the same day he published severe ordinances, but in the most humble terms, conjuring and commanding all to use just weights and measures, in order to prevent injustices and oppressions of the poor. He most rigorously forbade all his officers and servants ever to receive the least presents, which are no better than bribes, and bias the most impartial. Every Wednesday and Friday he sat the whole day on a bench before the church, that all might have free access to him to lay their grievances before him, and make known their necessities. He composed all differences, comforted the afflicted, and relieved the distressed. One of his first actions at Alexandria was to distribute the eighty thousand pieces of gold, which he found in the treasury of his church, among hospitals and monasteries. He consecrated to the service of the poor the great revenues of his see, then the first in all the East, both in

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi. 9.



riches and rank. Besides these, incredible charities flowed through his hands in continual streams, which his example excited every one to contribute according to their abilities. When his stewards complained that he impoverished his church, his answer was that God would provide for them. To vindicate his conduct and silence their complaints, he recounted to them a vision he had in his youth of a beautiful woman, brighter than the sun, with an olive garland on her head, whom he understood to be Charity, or compassion for the miserable, who said to him, "I am the eldest daughter of the great king. If you enjoy my favour, I will introduce you to the great monarch of the universe. No one has so great an interest with him as myself, who was the occasion of his coming down from heaven to become man for the redemption of mankind." When the Persians had plundered the East and sacked Jerusalem, St John entertained all that fled from their swords into Egypt; and sent to Jerusalem, for the use of the poor there, besides a large sum of money, one thousand sacks of corn, as many of pulse, one thousand pounds of iron, one thousand loads of fish, one thousand barrels of wine, and one thousand Egyptian workmen to assist in rebuilding the churches, adding, in his letter to Modestus, the bishop, that he wished it had been in his power to have gone in person and contributed the labour of his hands towards carrying on that holy work. He also sent two bishops and an abbot to ransom captives. No number of necessitous objects, no losses, no straits to which he saw himself often reduced, discouraged him or made him lose his confidence in divine providence, and resources never failed him in the end. When a certain person, whom he had privately relieved with a most bountiful alms, expressed his gratitude in the strongest terms, the saint cut him short, saying, "Brother, I have not yet spilt my blood for you, as Jesus Christ, my master and my God, commands me." A certain merchant, who had been thrice ruined by shipwrecks, had as often found relief from the good patriarch, who the third time gave him a ship belonging to the church, laden with twenty thousand measures of corn. This vessel was driven by a storm to the British Islands, and a famine raging there, the owners sold their cargo to great advantage, and brought back a considerable value in exchange, one half in money, the other in pewter.

The patriarch lived himself in the greatest austerity and poverty as to diet, apparel, and furniture. A person of distinction in the city being informed that our saint had but one blanket on his bed, and this a very sorry one, sent him one of value, begging his acceptance of it, and that he would make use of it for the sake of the donor. He accepted of it, and put it to the intended use, but it was only for one night, and this he passed in great uneasiness, with severe self-reproaches for being so richly covered while so many of his masters (his familiar term for the poor) were so ill

accommodated. The next morning he sold it, and gave the price to the poor. The friend, being informed of it, bought it for thirty-six pieces, and gave it him a second and a third time, for the saint always disposed of it in the same way, saying facetiously, "We shall see who will be tired first." He was very well versed in the scriptures, though a stranger to the pomp of profane eloquence. The functions of his ministry, prayer, and pious reading employed his whole time. He studied with great circumspection to avoid the least idle word, and never chose to speak about temporal affairs unless compelled by necessity, and then only in very few words. If he heard any detract from the reputation of their neighbour, he was ingenious in turning the discourse to some other subject, and he forbade them his house to deter others from that vice. Hearing that when an emperor was chosen it was customary for certain carvers to present to him four or five blocks of marble to choose one out of them for his tomb, he caused his grave to be half dug, and appointed a man to come to him on all occasions of pomp, and say, "My lord, your tomb is unfinished; be pleased to give your orders to have it completed, for you know not the hour when death will seize you." The remembrance of the rigorous account which we are to give to God made him often burst into the most pathetic expressions of holy fear. But humility was his distinguishing virtue, and he always expressed, both in words and actions, the deepest sentiments of his own nothingness, sinfulness, miseries, and pride. He often admired how perfectly the saints saw their own imperfections, and that they were dust, worms, and unworthy to be ranked among men.

The saint regarded injuries as his greatest gain and happiness. He always disarmed his enemies of their rancour by meekness, and frequently fell at the feet of those who insulted him to beg their pardon. Nicetas, the governor, had formed a project of a new tax very prejudicial to the poor. The patriarch modestly spoke in their defence. The governor, in a passion, left him abruptly. St John sent him this message towards evening—"The sun is going to set," putting him in mind of the advice of the apostle, "let not the sun go down upon your anger." This admonition had its intended effect on the governor, and pierced him to the quick. He arose, and went to the patriarch, bathed in tears, asked his pardon, and, by way of atonement, promised never more to give ear to informers and tale-bearers. St John confirmed him in that resolution, adding that he never believed any man whatever against another till he himself had examined the party accused; and that he punished all calumniators and tale-bearers in a manner which might deter others from so fatal a vice. Having in vain exhorted a certain nobleman to forgive one with whom he was at variance, he soon after invited him to his private chapel to assist at his mass, and there desired him to recite with him the

Lord's prayer. The saint stopped at that petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." When the nobleman had recited it alone, he conjured him to reflect on what he had been saying to God at the hour of the tremendous mysteries, begging to be pardoned in the same manner as he forgave others. The other, feeling himself struck to the heart, fell at his feet, and from that moment was sincerely reconciled with his adversary. The saint often exhorted men against rash judgment, saying, "Circumstances easily deceive us; magistrates are bound to examine and judge criminals, but what have private persons to do with others, unless it be to vindicate them?" He used to relate many examples of persons who were found innocent and eminent saints, though they had been condemned by the world upon circumstances, as that of a certain monk, who brought to that city a Jewess whom he had converted, but was accused as guilty of lewdness with her, and cruelly scourged, for he said nothing to justify himself, out of a desire of humiliation and suffering. But his innocence and sanctity were soon after brought to light. St John employed Sophronius and John Moschus in reducing to the faith the Severians and other heretics. Observing that many amused themselves without the church during part of the divine office, which was then of a very considerable length, he followed them out, and seated himself among them, saying, "My children, the shepherd must be with his flock." This action, which covered them with confusion, prevented their being guilty of that irreverence any more. As he was one day going to church he was accosted on the way by a woman who demanded justice against her son-in-law, that had injured her. The woman being ordered by some standers-by to wait the patriarch's return from church, he, overhearing them, said, "How can I hope that God will hear my prayer if I put off the petition of this woman?" nor did he stir from the place till he had redressed the grievance complained of.

Nicetas, the governor, persuaded the saint to accompany him to Constantinople to pay a visit to the emperor. St John was admonished from heaven whilst he was on his way, at Rhodes, that his death drew near, and said to Nicetas, "You invite me to the emperor of the earth, but the king of heaven calls me to himself." He therefore sailed for Cyprus, and soon after died happily at Amathus, about the year of our Lord 619, in the sixty-fourth of his age, and tenth of his patriarchal dignity. His body was afterwards carried to Constantinople, where it was kept a long time. The Turkish emperor made a present of it to Matthias, King of Hungary, which he deposited in his chapel at Buda. In 1530 it was translated to Tall, near Presbourg; and, in 1632, to the cathedral itself of Presbourg, where, according to Bollandus, it still remains. The Greeks honour this saint on the 11th of November, the day of his death, but the Roman Martyrology on the 23rd of January,

the day marked for the translation of his relics. His life, written by his two vicars, Sophronius and Moschus, is lost, but we have that by Leontius, Bishop of Naplouse, in Cyprus, from the relation of the saint's clergy, commended in the seventh general council. It is published more correct by Rosweide and Bollandus. We have another life of this saint, conformable to the former, given us by Metaphrastes. See *Le Quien, Oriens Christi*, t. ii. p. 446.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 23 :*

ST ASCLAS : ST BARNARD, Archbishop of Vienne, Confessor : SAINTS CLEMENT of ANCYRA and AGATHANGELUS, martyrs : ST EREMENTIANA, virgin and martyr : ST EUSEBIUS, Abbot, in the fourth century, of whom we are told that his countenance inspired all with the love of virtue. He prescribed for his monks mortifications of the senses, but made perpetual prayer the chief rule. ST ILDEPHONSUS, Archbishop of Toledo : ST JOHN THE ALMONER : ST LUFTHILD : ST MAIMBOD, martyr : BLESSED MARGARET OF RAVENNA, virgin : and ST RAYMUND OF PENNAFORT, who assumed the habit of St Dominic eight months after the death of the founder of that order. Before that, he taught philosophy gratis in Barcelona, but when he became a Dominican, though he was then forty-seven, no novice was so humble or obedient. In 1238 he was elected general but resigned two years after, being sixty-five. He pursued with new vigour his devotion to the conversion of the Saracens. He gave up his soul to God in his hundredth year, miracles rendering his tomb illustrious as they had distinguished his life.

#### JANUARY 24

#### ST TIMOTHY, B. AND M.

[See *Tillemont*, t. ii. p. 142.]

ST TIMOTHY, the beloved disciple of St Paul, was of Lycaonia, and probably of the city of Lystra. His father was a Gentile, but his mother Eunice, a Jewess. She, with Lois, his grandmother, embraced the Christian religion, and St. Paul commends their faith. Timothy had made the holy scriptures his study from his infancy.<sup>1</sup> When St Paul preached in Lycaonia, in the year 51, the brethren of Iconium and Lystra gave him so advantageous a character of the young man that the apostle, being deprived of St Barnaby, took him for the companion of his labours, but first circumcised him at Lystra. For though the Jewish ceremonies ceased to be obligatory from the death of Christ, it was still lawful to use them (but not as of precept and obligation) till about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem with the temple, that the synagogue might be buried with honour. Therefore St Paul refused to circumcise Titus, born of Gentile parents, to assert the liberty of the gospel, and to condemn those who erroneously affirmed circumcision to be still of precept in the New Law. On the other side, he circumcised Timothy, born of a Jewess, by that condescension to render him the more acceptable to the Jews, and to make it appear that himself was no enemy to their law. St Chrysostom<sup>2</sup> here admires the prudence, steadiness, and charity of St Paul; and we may add the voluntary obedience of the disciple. St Austin<sup>3</sup> extols his zeal and disinterestedness in immediately forsaking his country, his house,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Præf. in 1 Tim.*

<sup>3</sup> *Serm. 177, n. 7.*

and his parents to follow this apostle, to share in his poverty and sufferings. After he was circumcised, St Paul, by the imposition of hands, committed to him the ministry of preaching, his rare virtue making ample amends for his want of age.

St Paul travelled from Lystra over the rest of Asia, sailed into Macedon, and preached at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berœa, in the year 52. Being compelled to quit this last city by the fury of the Jews, he left Timothy behind him, to confirm the new converts there. On St Paul's arrival at Athens he sent for him, but being informed that the Christians of Thessalonica lay under a very heavy persecution for the faith, he soon after deputed him to go thither, to comfort and encourage them under it; and he returned to St Paul, then at Corinth, to give him an account of his success in that commission.<sup>1</sup> Upon this the apostle wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians. From Corinth St Paul went to Jerusalem, and thence to Ephesus, where he spent two years. Here he formed a resolution of returning into Greece, and sent Timothy and Erastus before him through Macedon, to apprise the faithful in those parts of his intention, and to prepare the alms intended to be sent the Christians of Jerusalem.

Timothy had a particular order to go afterwards to Corinth, to correct certain abuses, and to revive in the minds of the faithful there the doctrine which the apostle had taught them; who, writing soon after to the Corinthians, earnestly recommended this disciple to them.<sup>2</sup> St Paul waited in Asia for his return, and then went with him into Macedon and Achaia. St Timothy left him at Philippi, but rejoined him at Troas. The apostle on his return to Palestine was imprisoned, and after two years' custody at Cæsarea, was sent to Rome. Timothy seems to have been with him all or most of this time, and is named by him in the titles of his epistles to Philemon, and to the Philippians and Thessalonians, in the years 61 and 62. St Timothy himself suffered imprisonment for Christ, and gloriously confessed his name, in the presence of many witnesses; but was set at liberty.<sup>3</sup> He was ordained bishop by a prophecy, and a particular order of the Holy Ghost.<sup>4</sup> He received by this imposition of hands not only the grace of the sacrament, and the authority to govern the church, but also the power of miracles, and the other exterior gifts of the Holy Ghost. St Paul being returned from Rome into the East, in the year 64, left St Timothy at Ephesus, to govern that church, to oppose false teachers, and to ordain priests, deacons, and even bishops.<sup>5</sup> For St Chrysostom<sup>6</sup> and other fathers observe that he committed to him the care of all the churches of Asia: and St Timothy is always named the first bishop of Ephesus.<sup>7</sup>

St Paul wrote his first epistle to Timothy from Macedon, in 64; and

<sup>1</sup> Acts xviii.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. xiii. 23.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. i.

<sup>6</sup> Hom. 15, in 1 Tim.

<sup>7</sup> Eus. lib. iii. c. 4; Conc. t. iv. p. 699.

his second, in 65, from Rome, while there in chains, to press him to come to Rome, that he might see him again before he died. It is an effusion of his heart, full of tenderness towards this his dearest son. In it he encourages him, endeavours to renew and stir up in his soul that spirit of intrepidity and that fire of the Holy Ghost with which he was filled at his ordination; gives him instructions concerning the heretics of that time, and adds a lively description of such as would afterwards arise.<sup>1</sup>

We learn <sup>2</sup> that St Timothy drank only water: but his austerities having prejudiced his health, on account of his weak stomach and frequent infirmities, St Paul ordered him to use a little wine. The fathers observe that he only says a little, even in that necessity, because the flesh is to be kept weak, that the spirit may be vigorous and strong. St Timothy was then young: perhaps about forty. It is not improbable that he went to Rome to confer with his master. In the year 64 he was made by St Paul Bishop of Ephesus, before St John arrived there, who resided also in that city as an apostle, and exercising a general inspection over all the churches of Asia. St Timothy is styled a martyr in the ancient Martyrologies.

His acts, in some copies ascribed to the famous Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, but which seem to have been written at Ephesus in the fifth or sixth age and abridged by Photius, relate that under the emperor Nerva, in the year 97, St John being still in the isle of Patmos, St Timothy was slain with stones and clubs by the heathens whilst he was endeavouring to oppose their idolatrous ceremonies on one of their festivals called Catagogia, kept on the 22nd of January, on which the idolaters walked in troops, every one carrying in one hand an idol and in the other a club. St Paulinus,<sup>3</sup> Theodorus Lector, and Philostorgius <sup>4</sup> inform us that his relics were with great pomp translated to Constantinople in the year 356, in the reign of Constantius. St Paulinus witnesses that the least portion of them wrought many miracles wherever they were distributed. These precious remains, with those of St Andrew and St Luke, were deposited under the altar in the church of the apostles in that city, where the devils, by their howlings, testified how much they felt their presence, says St Jerom; <sup>5</sup> which St Chrysostom also confirms.<sup>6</sup>

Pious reading was the means by which St Timothy, encouraged by the example and exhortations of his virtuous grandmother and mother, imbibed in his tender years, and nourished during the whole course of his life, the most fervent spirit of religion and all virtues; and his ardour for holy reading and meditation is commended by St Paul as the proof of his devotion and earnest desire of advancing in divine charity. When this saint was wholly taken up in the most laborious and holy functions

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.  
<sup>4</sup> Lib. iii. c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. v. 23.  
<sup>5</sup> In Vigilant, c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Carm. 26.  
<sup>6</sup> Hom. i. ad Pop. Antioch

of the apostolic ministry, that great apostle strongly recommends to him always to be assiduous in the same practice,<sup>1</sup> and in all exercises of devotion.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 24 :*

ST ARTHEMIUS, Bishop of Clermont, Confessor : ST BABYLAS, the most celebrated of the Bishops of Antioch after St Ignatius ; martyred about the year 250 : ST CADOCUS or Cadoc, Abbot in Wales, eldest son to a Welsh prince who followed his father's example in renouncing the world and entering the religious life. He built a church and a monastery called Llancarven and a school which became fruitful in holy men. St Iltud renounced the world at this saint's persuasion, as also did St Gildas : ST FELICIAN, Bishop of Foligno, martyr : ST MACEDONIUS, anchorite : BLESSED MARCOLINO OF FORLI, Confessor, 1397 : and ST TIMOTHY.

## JANUARY 25

### SS. JUVENTINUS AND MAXIMINUS, MARTYRS

(A.D. 363)

[From the elegant panegyric of St Chrysostom, t. ii. p. 578, ed. Montf. ; and from Theodoret, Hist. lib. iii. c. ix.]

THESE martyrs were two officers of distinction in the foot-guards of Julian the Apostate. When that tyrant was on his march against the Persians, they let fall at table certain free reflections on his impious laws against the Christians, wishing rather for death than to see the profanation of holy things. The emperor being informed of this, sent for them, and finding that they could not be prevailed upon by any means to retract what they had said, nor to sacrifice to idols, he confiscated their estates, caused them to be cruelly scourged, and, some days after, to be beheaded in prison at Antioch, on the 25th of January, 363. The Christians, with the hazard of their lives, stole away their bodies, and, after the death of Julian, who was slain in Persia on the 26th of June following, erected for them a magnificent tomb. On their festival St Chrysostom pronounced their panegyric, in which he says of these martyrs, " They support the church as pillars, defend it as towers, and repel all assaults as rocks. Let us visit them frequently, let us touch their shrine, and embrace their relics with confidence, that we may obtain from thence some benediction. For as soldiers, showing to the king the wounds which they have received in his battles, speak with confidence, so they, by an humble representation of their past sufferings for Christ, obtain whatever they ask of the king of heaven." <sup>2</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 25 :*

ST APOLLO, about 395, who, after passing many years as a hermit, assembled and governed a company of five hundred monks when he was eighty. They wore the coarse white habit, received Holy Communion every day, and were daily exhorted by the aged abbot. He was known by his joyful countenance and often told his brethren of the evils of sadness and melancholy. Miracles are told of him, including multiplication of bread in time of famine. ST ARTEMAS, martyr : the CONVERSION OF ST PAUL, which turned a persecutor into an Apostle of Christ : the full story of this event is in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter ix. verses 1 to 22, read as the Epistle at the Mass of this Feast. ST POPPO, Abbot of Stavelot, born in Flanders, 987. His mother died a nun at Verdun : ST PRÆJECTUS, Bishop of Clermont, martyred January 25, 676 : ST PUBLIUS, Abbot, who died about 380 ; remarkably earnest in avoiding sloth, being sensible of the inestimable value of time : and SAINTS JUVENTINUS AND MAXIMINUS, martyrs.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 7 and 13.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. in SS. Juv. et Max. t. ii. p. 583.

JANUARY 26

## ST POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA, MARTYR

(A.D. 166)

[From his acts, written by the church of Smyrna in an excellent circular letter to the churches of Pontus, immediately after his martyrdom; a piece abridged by Eusebius, lib. iv. c. 14, highly esteemed by the ancients. Joseph Scaliger, a supercilious critic, says that nothing in the whole course of church history so strongly affected him as the perusal of these acts, and those relating to the martyrs of Lyons; that he never read them but they gave him extraordinary emotions. Animad. in Chron. Eusebii, n. 2183, &c. They are certainly most valuable pieces of Christian antiquity. See Eusebius, St Jerom, and St Irenæus; also Tillemont, t. ii. p. 327; Dom Ceillier, t. i.; Dom Marechal, Concordance des Pères Grecs et Latins, t. i.]

ST POLYCARP was one of the most illustrious of the apostolic fathers, who, being the immediate disciples of the apostles, received instructions from their mouths, and inherited of them the spirit of Christ in a degree so much the more eminent as they lived nearer the fountain head. He embraced Christianity very young, about the year 80, was a disciple of the apostles, in particular of St John the Evangelist, and was constituted by him Bishop of Smyrna, probably before his banishment to Patmos in 96, so that he governed that important see seventy years. He seems to have been the angel or bishop of Smyrna who was commended above all the bishops of Asia by Christ himself in the Apocalypse,<sup>1</sup> and the only one without a reproach. Our Saviour encouraged him under his poverty, tribulation, and persecutions, especially the calumnies of the Jews, called him rich in grace, and promised him the crown of life by martyrdom. This saint was respected by the faithful to a degree of veneration. He formed many holy disciples, among whom were St Irenæus and Papias. When Florinus, who had often visited St Polycarp, had broached certain heresies, St Irenæus wrote to him as follows:<sup>2</sup> "These things were not taught you by the bishops who preceded us. I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance and of his whole exterior, and what were his holy exhortations to the people. I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ; the words he had heard from their mouths. I can protest before God that if this holy bishop had heard of any error like yours, he would have immediately stopped his ears, and cried out, according to his custom, Good God! that I should be reserved to these times to hear such things! That very instant he would have fled out of the place in which he had heard such doctrine." St Jerom<sup>3</sup> mentions that St Polycarp met at Rome the heretic Marcion in the streets, who resenting that the holy bishop did not take that notice of him which he

<sup>1</sup> Ch. ii. v. 9.<sup>2</sup> Eus. Hist. lib. v. c. 20, p. 188.<sup>3</sup> Cat. vir. illustr. c. 17.



expected, said to him, "Do you not know me, Polycarp?" "Yes," answered the saint, "I know you to be the firstborn of Satan." He had learned this abhorrence of the authors of heresy, who knowingly and willingly adulterate the divine truths, from his master, St John, who fled out of the bath in which he saw Cerinthus.<sup>1</sup> St Polycarp kissed with respect the chains of St Ignatius, who passed by Smyrna on the road to his martyrdom, and who recommended to our saint the care and comfort of his distant church of Antioch, which he repeated to him in a letter from Troas, desiring him to write in his name to those churches of Asia to which he had not leisure to write himself. St Polycarp wrote a letter to the Philippians shortly after, which is highly commended by St Irenæus, St Jerom, Eusebius, Photius, and others, and is still extant. It is justly admired both for the excellent instructions it contains and for the simplicity and perspicuity of the style, and was publicly read in the church in Asia in St Jerom's time. In it he calls a heretic, as above, the eldest son of Satan.

About the year 158 he undertook a journey of charity to Rome, to confer with Pope Anicetus about certain points of discipline, especially about the time of keeping Easter, for the Asiatic churches kept it on the fourteenth day of the vernal equinoctial moon, as the Jews did, on whatever day of the week it fell; whereas Rome, Egypt, and all the West observed it on the Sunday following. It was agreed that both might follow their custom without breaking the bands of charity. St Anicetus, to testify his respect, yielded to him the honour of celebrating the Eucharist in his own church.<sup>2</sup> We find no further particulars concerning our saint recorded before the acts of his martyrdom.

In the sixth year of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, Statius Quadratus being proconsul of Asia, a violent persecution broke out in that country, in which the faithful gave heroic proofs of their courage and love of God, to the astonishment of the infidels. When they were torn to pieces with scourges till their very bowels were laid bare, amidst the moans and tears of the spectators, who were moved with pity at the sight of their torments, not one of them gave so much as a single groan, so little regard had they for their own flesh in the cause of God. No kinds of torture, no inventions of cruelty, were forborne to force them to a conformity to the pagan worship of the times. Germanicus, who had been brought to Smyrna with eleven or twelve other Christians, signalled himself above the rest, and animated the most timorous to suffer. The proconsul in the amphitheatre called upon him with tenderness, entreated him to have some regard for his youth, and to value at least his life, but he, with a holy impatience, provoked the beasts to devour him, to leave this wicked world. One Quintus, a Phrygian, who had presented himself to

<sup>1</sup> See also 1 John ii. 18, 22, and 2 John 10.

<sup>2</sup> St Iren. lib. iii. c. 3; Euseb. lib. v. c. 24; St Hieron, c. 17.

the judge, yielded at the sight of the beast let out upon him, and sacrificed. The authors of these acts justly condemn the presumption of those who offered themselves to suffer,<sup>1</sup> and say that the martyrdom of St Polycarp was conformable to the gospel, because he exposed not himself to the temptation, but waited till the persecutors laid hands on him, as Christ our Lord taught us by his own example. The spectators, seeing the courage of Germanicus and his companions, and being fond of their impious bloody diversions, cried out, "Away with the impious! let Polycarp be sought for!" The holy man, though fearless, had been prevailed upon by his friends to withdraw and conceal himself in a neighbouring village during the storm, spending most of his time in prayer. Three days before his martyrdom, he in a vision saw his pillow on fire, from which he understood by revelation, and foretold his companions, that he should be burnt alive.

When the persecutors were in quest of him he changed his retreat, but was betrayed by a boy, who was threatened with the rack unless he discovered him. Herod, the Irenarch, or keeper of the peace, whose office it was to prevent misdemeanours and apprehend malefactors, sent horsemen by night to beset his lodgings. The saint was above stairs in bed, but refused to make his escape, saying, "God's will be done." He went down, met them at the door, ordered them a handsome supper, and desired only some time for prayer before he went with them. This granted, he began his prayer standing, which he continued in that posture for two hours, recommending to God his own flock and the whole church with so much earnestness and devotion that several of those that were come to seize him repented they had undertaken the commission. They set him on an ass, and were conducting him towards the city when he was met on the road by Herod and his father Nicetes, who took him into their chariot, and endeavoured to persuade him to a little compliance, saying, "What harm is there in saying Lord Cæsar, or even in sacrificing, to escape death?" By the word *Lord* was meant nothing less than a kind of deity or godhead. The bishop at first was silent, in imitation of our Saviour, but being pressed, he gave them this resolute answer, "I shall never do what you desire of me." At these words, taking off the mask of friendship and compassion, they treated him with scorn and reproaches, and thrust him out of the chariot with such violence that his leg was bruised by the fall. The holy man went forward cheerfully to the place where the people were assembled. Upon his entering it a voice from heaven was heard by many, "Polycarp, be courageous, and act manfully." He was led directly to the tribunal of the proconsul, who exhorted him to respect his own age, to swear by the genius of Cæsar, and to say, "Take away the impious," meaning the Christians. The saint, turning towards

the people in the pit, said, with a stern countenance, "Exterminate the wicked," meaning by this expression either a wish that they might cease to be wicked by their conversion to the faith of Christ, or this was a prediction of the calamity which befel their city in 177, when Smyrna was overturned by an earthquake, as we read in Dion<sup>1</sup> and Aristides.<sup>2</sup> The proconsul repeated, "Swear by the genius of Cæsar, and I discharge you; blaspheme Christ." Polycarp replied, "I have served him these fourscore and six years, and he never did me any harm, but much good, and how can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour? If you require of me to swear by the genius of Cæsar, as you call it, hear my free confession—I am a Christian; but if you desire to learn the Christian religion, appoint a time, and hear me." The proconsul said, "Persuade the people." The martyr replied, "I addressed my discourse to you, for we are taught to give due honour to princes as far as is consistent with religion. But the populace is an incompetent judge to justify myself before." Indeed rage rendered them incapable of hearing him.

The proconsul then assuming a tone of severity, said: "I have wild beasts." "Call for them," replied the saint: "for we are unalterably resolved not to change from good to evil. It is only good to pass from evil to good." The proconsul said: "If you condemn the beasts, I will cause you to be burnt to ashes." Polycarp answered: "You threaten me with a fire which burns for a short time and then goes out, but are yourself ignorant of the judgment to come, and of the fire of everlasting torments which is prepared for the wicked. Why do you delay? Bring against me what you please." Whilst he said this and many other things, he appeared in a transport of joy and confidence, and his countenance shone with a certain heavenly grace and pleasant cheerfulness, insomuch that the proconsul himself was struck with admiration. However, he ordered a crier to make public proclamation three times in the middle of the Stadium (as was the Roman custom in capital cases): "Polycarp hath confessed himself a Christian." At this proclamation the whole multitude of Jews and Gentiles gave a great shout, the latter crying out, "This is the great teacher of Asia; the father of the Christians; the destroyer of our gods, who preaches to men not to sacrifice to or adore them." They applied to Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. He told them that it was not in his power, because those shows had been closed. Then they unanimously demanded that he should be burnt alive. Their request was no sooner granted but every one ran with all speed to fetch wood from the baths and shops. The pile being prepared, Polycarp put off his garments, untied his girdle, and began to take off his shoes, an office he had not been accustomed to, the Christians having always striven who should do these things for him, regarding it

<sup>1</sup> L. 71.<sup>2</sup> Or, 20, 21, 22, 41.

as a happiness to be admitted to touch him. The wood and other combustibles were heaped all round him. The executioners would have nailed him to the stake; but he said to them: "Suffer me to be as I am. He who gives me grace to undergo this fire will enable me to stand still without that precaution." They therefore contented themselves with tying his hands behind his back, and in this posture looking up towards heaven, he prayed as follows: "O Almighty Lord God, Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of thee, God of angels, powers, and every creature, and of all the race of the just that live in thy presence! I bless thee for having been pleased in thy goodness to bring me to this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of thy martyrs, and partake of the chalice of thy Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life, in the incorruptibleness of the holy Spirit. Amongst whom grant me to be received this day as a pleasing sacrifice, such an one as thou thyself hast prepared, that so thou mayest accomplish what thou, O true and faithful God! hast foreshown. Wherefore, for all things I praise, bless, and glorify thee, through the eternal high priest Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thee and the Holy Ghost be glory now and for ever. Amen." He had scarce said Amen when fire was set to the pile, which increased to a mighty flame. But behold a wonder, say the authors of these acts, seen by us reserved to attest it to others; the flames forming themselves into an arch, like the sails of a ship swelled with the wind, gently encircled the body of the martyr, which stood in the middle, resembling not roasted flesh, but purified gold or silver, appearing bright through the flames; and his body sending forth such a fragrancy that we seemed to smell precious spices. The blind infidels were only exasperated to see his body could not be consumed, and ordered a spearman to pierce him through, which he did, and such a quantity of blood issued out of his left side as to quench the fire. The malice of the devil ended not here: he endeavoured to obstruct the relics of the martyr being carried off by the Christians; for many desired to do it, to show their respect to his body. Therefore, by the suggestion of Satan, Nicetes advised the proconsul not to bestow it on the Christians, lest, said he, abandoning the crucified man, they should adore Polycarp: the Jews suggested this, "Not knowing," say the authors of the acts, "that we can never forsake Christ, nor adore any other, though we love the martyrs, as his disciples and imitators, for the great love they bore their king and master." The centurion, seeing a contest raised by the Jews, placed the body in the middle, and burnt it to ashes. "We afterwards took up the bones," say they, "more precious than the richest jewels or gold, and deposited them decently in a place at which may God grant us to assemble with joy, to celebrate the birthday of the martyr." Thus these disciples and eye-witnesses. It was at two o'clock in the

afternoon, which the authors of the acts call the eighth hour, in the year 166, that St Polycarp received his crown, according to Tillemont; but in 169, according to Basnage.<sup>1</sup> His tomb is still shown with great veneration at Smyrna, in a small chapel. St Irenæus speaks of St Polycarp as being of an uncommon age.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 26 :*

BLESSED ALBERIC, Abbot of Cîteaux, Confessor, 1109. "Let us not mourn for the soldier who is at rest," St Stephen, his successor, wrote : "let us mourn for ourselves, in the front of the battle. Let us turn our sad speeches into prayers, begging our father who is in triumph not to suffer the savage enemy to triumph over us." ST CONAN, Bishop of the Isle of Man : ST PAULA, widow, born May 5, 347, lost her husband when she was thirty-two. Her grief was excessive; but she erected in her heart the standard of Christ, devoting her life to prayer, pious reading, and fasting. In 348 St Jerome wrote to comfort and reprove her wild grief at the death of a beloved married daughter. She left home, family, riches, friends; yet "never did a mother love her children so tenderly," says this saint's "epitaph," written by St Jerome : and ST POLYCARP.

JANUARY 27

## ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE, AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

(A.D. 407)

[From Socrates, Theodoret, and other historians : as also from the saint's works ; and his life, written by way of dialogue, with great fidelity, by his friend and strenuous advocate Palladius, an holy bishop, but a distinct person from Palladius the Bishop of Helenopolis and author of the Lausiaca history, who was then young, and is evidently distinguished by this writer in many places, as Tillemont, Montfaucon, and Stilling show against Baillet and others; though also Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis, exerted himself in defence of St Chrysostom. Palladius, author of the Dialogue on the life of St Chrysostom, was never accused of Origenism except by those who, at least in the proofs alleged for this charge, confounded him with the Bishop of Helenopolis. F. Stilling clears also the latter from the charge of Origenism, and answers the arguments produced by Baronius against him. Comm. Hist. § 1, p. 404. The latter Greek panegyrists, George, Patriarch of Alexandria, in 620, the emperor Leo the Wise, in 890, &c., deserve very little notice. See the life of our saint compiled by Dom Montfaucon, Op. t. xiii. And lastly the accurate commentary on his life given by F. Stilling the Bollandist on the 14th of September, from p. 401 to 709, t. iv.]

THIS incomparable doctor, on account of the fluency and sweetness of his eloquence, obtained soon after his death the surname of Chrysostom or Golden Mouth, which we find given him by St Ephrem of Antioch, Theodoret, and Cassiodorus. But his tender piety, and his undaunted courage and zeal in the cause of virtue, are titles far more glorious, by which he holds an eminent place among the greatest pastors and saints of the church. About the year 344, according to F. Stilling, Antioch, the capital city of the East, was ennobled by his illustrious birth. He had one elder sister, and was the only son and heir of Secundus, master of the horse, that is, chief commander of the imperial troops in Syria. His mother Anthusa, left a widow at twenty years of age, continued such the remainder of her life, dividing her time between the care of her family

<sup>1</sup> St Polycarp says himself, "That he had served Christ eighty-six years." Basnage thinks he had been bishop so long, and was a hundred and twenty years old when he suffered : but it is far more probable that this is the term he had been a Christian, having been converted in his youth, and dying about one hundred years old or upwards, as Tillemont understands it.

and the exercise of devotion. Her example in this respect made such an impression on our saint's master, a celebrated pagan sophist, that he could not forbear crying out, "What wonderful women have the Christians!"<sup>1</sup> She managed the estate of her children with great prudence and frugality, knowing this to be part of her duty to God, but she was sensible that their spiritual instruction in virtue was of infinitely greater importance. From their cradle she instilled into them the most perfect maxims of piety, and contempt of the world. The ancient Romans dreaded nothing more in the education of youth than their being ill-taught the first principles of the sciences; it being more difficult to unlearn the errors then imbibed than to begin on a mere *tabula rasa*, or black paper. Wherefore Anthusa provided her son the ablest masters in every branch of literature which the empire at that time afforded. Eloquence was esteemed the highest accomplishment, especially among the nobility, and was the surest means of raising men to the first dignities in the state. John studied that art under Libanius, the most famous orator of that age; and such was his proficiency that even in his youth he excelled his masters. Libanius being asked by his pagan friends on his death-bed, about the year 390, who should succeed him in his school: "John," said he, "had not the Christians stolen him from us."<sup>2</sup> Our saint was then priest. The progress of the young scholar in philosophy, under Andragatius, was no less rapid and surprising; his genius shone in every disputation. All this time his principal care was to study Christ, and to learn his spirit.

The first dignities of the empire were open to John; but his principal desire was to dedicate himself to God, without reserve, in holy solitude. However, not being yet twenty years of age, he for some time pleaded at the bar. In that employment he was drawn by company into the diversions of the world, and sometimes assisted at the entertainments of the stage. His virtue was in imminent danger of splitting against that fatal rock when God opened his eyes. He was struck with horror at the sight of the precipice upon the brink of which he stood; and, not content to flee from it himself, he never ceased to bewail his blindness, and took every occasion to caution the faithful against that lurking place of hellish syrens, but more particularly in his vehement sermons against the stage. Alarmed at the danger he had narrowly escaped, full of gratitude to God his deliverer, and to prevent the like danger for the time to come, he was determined to carry his resolution of renouncing the world into immediate execution. He began, by the change of his garb, to rid himself the more easily of the importunities of friends: for a penitential habit is not only a means for preserving a spirit of mortification and humility, but is also a public sign and declaration to the world that a person has turned his back on its vanities, and is engaged in an irreconcilable war

<sup>1</sup> St Chrys. ad Vid. jun. t. i. p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> Sozom. lib. viii. c. 22.

against them. His clothing was a coarse grey coat, he watched much, fasted every day, and spent the greater part of his time in prayer and meditation on the holy scriptures: his bed was no other than the hard floor. In subduing his passions, he found none of so difficult a conquest as vain-glory;<sup>1</sup> this enemy he disarmed by embracing every kind of public humiliation. The clamours of his old friends and admirers, who were incensed at his leaving them, and pursued him with their invectives and censures, were as arrows shot at random: John took no manner of notice of them; he rejoiced in contempt, and despised the frowns of a world whose flatteries he dreaded: Christ crucified was the only object of his heart, and nothing could make him look back after he had put his hand to the plough. And his progress in virtue was answerable to his zealous endeavours.

St Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, called the young ascetic to the service of the church, gave him suitable instructions, during three years, in his own palace, and ordained him Reader. John had learned the art of silence in his retirement with far greater application than he had before studied that of speaking. This he discovered when he appeared again in the world, though no man ever possessed a greater fluency of speech or a more ready and enchanting eloquence, joined with the most solid judgment and a rich fund of knowledge and good sense; yet in company he observed a modest silence, and regarded talkativeness as an enemy to the interior recollection of the heart, as a source of many sins and indiscretions, and as a mark of vanity and self-conceit. He heard the words of the wise with the humble docility of a scholar, and he bore the impertinence, trifles, and blunders of fools in discourse, not to interrupt the attention of his soul to God, or to make an ostentatious show of his eloquence or science; yet with spiritual persons he conversed freely on heavenly things, especially with a pious friend named Basil, one of the same age and inclinations with himself, who had been his most beloved schoolfellow, and who forsook the world to embrace a monastic life a little before our saint. After three years he left the bishop's house to satisfy the importunities of his mother, but continued the same manner of life in her house during the space of two years. He still saw frequently his friend Basil, and he prevailed on two of his schoolfellows under Libanius to embrace an ascetic life—Theodorus, afterwards Bishop of Mopsuestia, and Maximus, Bishop of Seleucia. The former returned in a short time to the bar, and fell in love with a young lady called Hermione. John lamented his fall with bitter tears before God, and brought him back to his holy institute by two tender and pathetic exhortations to penance, "which breathe an eloquence above the power of what seems merely human," says Sozomen. Basil was made Bishop of Raphanæa, near Antioch, and had no other

<sup>1</sup> Lib. de Sacerd. c. 14.



## SAINT JOHANNES CHRISOSTOMUS

*To face page*

Although this great doctor of the Church is shown here in all the splendour of his bishop's robes, there was a time when he lived in a cave among the mountains near Antioch. Wearing a rough grey habit, St. John led the life of a hermit. His bed was a mat spread on the ground; his daily food, coarse bread flavoured with salt.



resource in his grief for his promotion but in tears and complaints against his friend who had betrayed him into so perilous a charge. John, being then twenty-six years old, wrote to him in his own justification six incomparable books, "Of the Priesthood."

Four years after, in 374, he retired into the mountains near Antioch, among certain holy anchorets who peopled them, and whose manner of life is thus described by our saint:<sup>1</sup> They devoted all the morning to prayer, pious reading, and meditating on the holy scriptures. Their food was bread with a little salt; some added oil, and those who were very weak a few herbs or pulse; no one ever ate before sunset. After the refecton it was allowed to converse with one another, but only on heavenly things. They always closed their night-prayers with the remembrance of the last judgment, to excite themselves to a constant watchfulness and preparation, which practice St Chrysostom earnestly recommends to all Christians with the evening examination.<sup>2</sup> These monks had no other bed than a mat spread on the bare ground. Their garments were made of the rough hair of goats or camels, or of old skins, and such as the poorest beggars would not wear, though some of them were of the richest families, and had been tenderly brought up. They wore no shoes; no one possessed anything as his own; even their poor necessities were all in common. They inherited their estates only to distribute them among the poor; and on them, and in hospitality to strangers, they bestowed all the spare profits of their work. They all used the same food, wore a uniform habit, and by charity were all one heart. The cold words *mine* and *thine*, the baneful source of lawsuits and animosities among men, were banished from their cells. They rose at the first crowing of the cock—that is, at midnight, being called up by the superior; and after the morning hymns and psalms—that is, matins and lauds, all remained in their private cells, where they read the holy scriptures, and some copied books. All met in the church at the canonical hours of tierce, sext, none, and vespers, but returned to their cells, none being allowed to speak, to jest or to be one moment idle. The time which others spend at table or in diversions they employed in honouring God; even their meal took up very little time, and after a short sleep (according to the custom of hot countries) they resumed their exercises, conversing not with men but with God, with the prophets and apostles in their writings and pious meditation; and spiritual things were the only subject of their entertainment. For corporal exercise they employed themselves in some mean manual labour, such as entertained them in humility, and could not inspire vanity or pride; they made baskets, tilled and watered the earth, hewed wood, attended the kitchen, washed the feet of all strangers,

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 72 (ol. 73) and 68 (ol. 69) in Matt. Hom. 14 in 1 Tim. t. xi. pp. 628, 630, lib. iii. contra vitup. vitæ Mon. c. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. de Compunct. p. 132.

and waited on them without distinction whether they were rich or poor. The saint adds that anger, jealousy, envy, grief, and anxiety for worldly goods and concerns were unknown in these poor cells; and he assures us that the constant peace, joy, and pleasure which reigned in them were as different from the bitterness and tumultuous scenes of the most brilliant worldly felicity, as the security and calmness of the most agreeable harbour are from the dangers and agitation of the most tempestuous ocean. Such was the rule of these cenobites or monks who lived in community. There were also hermits on the same mountains who lay on ashes, wore sack-cloth, and shut themselves up in frightful caverns, practising more extraordinary austerities. Our saint was at first apprehensive that he should find it an insupportable difficulty to live without fresh bread, use the same stinking oil for his food and for his lamp, and inure his body to hard labour under so great austerities.<sup>1</sup> But by courageously despising this apprehension, in consequence of a resolution to spare nothing by which he might learn perfectly to die to himself, he found the difficulty entirely to vanish in the execution. Experience shows that in such undertakings the imagination is alarmed not so much by realities as phantoms, which vanish before a courageous heart which can look them in the face with contempt. Abbot Rancé, the reformer of La Trappe, found more difficulty in the thought of rising without a fire in winter, in the beginning of his conversion, than he did in the greatest severities which he afterwards practised. St Chrysostom passed four years under the conduct of a veteran Syrian monk, and afterwards two years in a cave as a hermit. The dampness of this abode brought on him a dangerous distemper, and for the recovery of his health he was obliged to return into the city. By this means he was restored to the service of the church in 381, for the benefit of innumerable souls. He was ordained deacon by St Meletius that very year, and priest by Flavian in 386, who at the same time constituted him his vicar and preacher, our saint being then in the forty-third year of his age. He discharged all the duties of that arduous station during twelve years, being the hand and the eye of his bishop, and his mouth to his flock. The instruction and care of the poor he regarded as his first obligation; this he always made his favourite employment and his delight. He never ceased in his sermons to recommend their cause and the precept of almsdeeds to the people. Antioch, he supposes, contained at that time one hundred thousand Christian souls; all these he fed with the word of God, preaching several days in the week, and frequently several times on the same day. He confounded the Jews and pagans, also the Anomæans and other heretics. He abolished the most inveterate abuses, repressed vice, and changed the whole face of that great city. It seemed as if nothing could withstand the united power of his eloquence, zeal, and piety.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. i. de Compunct. &c.

Theodosius I finding himself obliged to levy a new tax on his subjects, on occasion of his war with Maximus, who had usurped the Western empire in 387, the populace of Antioch, provoked at the demand, mutinied, and discharged their rage on the emperor's statue, those of his father, his two sons, and his late consort Flavilla, dragged them with ropes through the streets, and then broke them to pieces. The magistrates durst not oppose the rabble in their excesses. But as soon as their fury was over, and that they began to reflect on what they had been guilty of, and the natural consequences of their extravagances, they were all seized with such terror and consternation that many abandoned the city, others absconded, and scarce any durst appear publicly in the streets. The magistrates in the meantime were filling the prisons with citizens, in order to their trials, on account of their respective share in the combustion. Their fears were heightened on the arrival of two officers dispatched from Constantinople to execute the emperor's orders with regard to the punishment of the rioters. The reports which were spread abroad on this occasion imported that the emperor would cause the guilty to be burned alive, would confiscate their estates, and level the city with the ground. The consternation alone was a greater torment than the execution itself could have been. Flavian, notwithstanding his very advanced age, and though his sister was dying when he left her, set out without delay, in a very severe season of the year, to implore the emperor's clemency in favour of his flock. Being come to the palace, and admitted into the emperor's presence, he no sooner perceived that prince but he stopped at a distance, holding down his head, covering his face, and speaking only by his tears, as though himself had been guilty. Thus he remained for some time. The emperor seeing him in this condition, carrying as it were the weight of the public guilt in his breast, instead of employing harsh reproaches, as Flavian might naturally have expected, summed up the many favours he had conferred on that city, and said at the conclusion of each article, "Is this the acknowledgment I had reason to expect? Is this their return for my love? What cause of complaint had they against me? Had I ever injured them? But granting that I had, what can they allege for extending their insolence even to the dead? Had they received any wrong from them? Why were they to be insulted too? What tenderness have I not shown on all occasions for their city? Is it not notorious that I have given it the preference in my love and esteem to all others, even to that which gave me birth? Did not I always express a longing desire to see it, and that it gave me the highest satisfaction to think I should soon be in a condition of taking a journey for this purpose?"

Then the holy bishop, being unable to bear such stinging reproaches, or vindicate their conduct, made answer: "We acknowledge, sir, that you have on all occasions favoured us with the greatest demonstrations

of your singular affection; and this it is that enhances both our crime and our grief that we should have carried our ingratitude to such a pitch as to have offended our best friend and greatest benefactor: hence, whatever punishment you may inflict upon us, it will still fall short of what we deserve. But, alas! the evil we have done ourselves is worse than innumerable deaths; for what can be more afflicting than to live, in the judgment of all mankind, guilty of the blackest ingratitude, and to see ourselves deprived of your sweet and gracious protection, which was our bulwark? We dare not look any man in the face; no, not the sun itself. But as great as our misery is, it is not irremediable, for it is in your power to remove it. Great affronts among private men have often been the occasion of great charity. When the devil's envy had destroyed man, God's mercy restored him. That wicked spirit, jealous of our city's happiness, has plunged her into this abyss of evils, out of which you alone can rescue her. It is your affection, I dare say it, which has brought them upon us, by exciting the jealousy of the wicked spirits against us. But, like God himself, you may draw infinite good out of the evil which they intended us. If you spare us, you are revenged on them. Your clemency on this occasion will be more honourable to you than your most celebrated victories. It will adorn your head with a far brighter diadem than that which you wear, as it will be the fruit only of your own virtue. Your statues have been thrown down; if you pardon this insult, you will raise yourself others, not of marble or brass, which time destroys, but such as will exist eternally in the hearts of all those who will hear of this action. Your predecessor, Constantine the Great, when importuned by his courtiers to exert his vengeance on some seditious people that had disfigured his statues by throwing stones at them, did nothing more than stroke his face with his hand, and told them, smiling, that he did not feel himself hurt. This his saying is yet in the mouths of all men—a more illustrious trophy to his memory than all the cities which he built, than all the barbarous nations which he subdued. Remember your own memorable saying, when you ordered the prisons to be opened, and the criminals to be pardoned at the feast of Easter, 'Would to God I were able in the same manner to open the graves, and restore the dead to life!' That time is now come. Here is a city whose inhabitants are already dead, and is, as it were, at the gates of its sepulchre. Raise it then, as it is in your power to do without cost or labour. A word will suffice. Suffer it by your clemency to be still named among the living cities. It will owe then more to you than to its very founder. He built it small, you will raise it great and populous. To have preserved it from being destroyed by barbarians would not have been so great an exploit as to spare it on such an occasion as now offers.

“Neither is the preservation of an illustrious city the only thing to be

considered; your own glory, and, above all, the honour of the Christian religion, are highly interested in this affair. The Jews and pagans, all barbarous nations—nay, the whole world, have their eyes fixed on you at this critical juncture; all are waiting for the judgment you will pronounce. If it be favourable, they will be filled with admiration, and will agree to praise and worship that God who checks the anger of those who acknowledge no master upon earth, and who can transform men into angels; they will embrace that religion which teaches such sublime morality. Listen not to those who will object that your clemency on this occasion may be attended with, and give encouragement to, the like disorders in other cities. That could only happen if you spared for want of a power to chastise; but whereas you do not divest yourself by such an act of clemency of this power, and as by it you endear and rivet yourself the more in the affections of your subjects, this, instead of encouraging such insults and disorders, will rather the more effectually prevent them. Neither immense sums of money, nor innumerable armies, could ever have gained you so much the hearts of your subjects and their prayers for your person and empire as will this single action. And if you stand fair for being such a gainer from men, what rewards may you not reasonably expect from God? It is easy for a master to punish, but rare and difficult to pardon."

This discourse had its desired effect on the emperor, who with much difficulty suppressed his tears while the bishop spoke, whom he answered in these few words: "If Jesus Christ, the Lord of all things, vouchsafed to pardon and pray for those very men that crucified him, ought I to hesitate to pardon them who have offended me? I, who am but a mortal man like them, and a servant of the same master." The patriarch, overjoyed at his success, prostrated himself at the emperor's feet, wishing him a reward for such an action suitable to its merit. And whereas the prelate made an offer of passing the feast of Easter with the emperor at Constantinople, he, to testify how sincerely he was reconciled to the city of Antioch, urged his immediate return, saying: "Go, Father, delay not a moment the consolation your people will receive at your return, by communicating to them the assurances of the pardon I grant them; I know they must be in great affliction." The bishop set out accordingly; but, to delay as little as possible the joy of the citizens, he dispatched a courier before him with the emperor's letter of pardon, which produced a comfortable change in the face of affairs. The bishop himself arrived time enough before Easter to keep that solemnity with his people. The joy and triumph of that city could not be greater; it is elegantly described by St Chrysostom, extolling above all things the humility and modesty of Flavian, who attributed the whole change of Theodosius's mind, and all the glory of the action, to God alone. The discourse which Flavian

addressed to the emperor, except the introduction, had been composed by St Chrysostom, who recited it to the people to comfort them, and ceased not strongly to exhort them to penance, and the fervent exercise of good works, during the whole time of their bishop's absence.<sup>1</sup> After this storm our saint continued his labours with unwearied zeal, and was the honour, the delight, and the darling not of Antioch only, but of all the East, and his reputation spread itself over the whole empire.<sup>2</sup> But God was pleased to call him to glorify his name on a new theatre, where he prepared for his virtue other trials and other crowns.

St Chrysostom had been five years deacon and twelve years priest when Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, dying in 397, the emperor Arcadius, at the suggestion of Eutropius the eunuch, his chamberlain, resolved to procure the election of our saint to the patriarchate of that city. He therefore dispatched a secret order to the count of the East, enjoining him to send John to Constantinople, but by some stratagem, lest his intended removal, if known at Antioch, should cause a sedition, and be rendered impracticable. The count repaired to Antioch, and desiring the saint to accompany him out of the city to the tombs of the martyrs, on the pretence of devotion, he there delivered him into the hands of an officer sent on purpose, who taking him into his chariot, conveyed him with all possible speed to the imperial city. Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, a man of a proud and turbulent spirit, was come thither to recommend a creature of his own to that dignity. He endeavoured by illegal practices secretly to traverse the canonical promotion of our saint; but was detected, and threatened to be accused in a synod. Whereupon he was glad to desist from his intrigues, and thus John was consecrated by him on the 26th of February, in 398.<sup>3</sup> In regulating his own conduct and his domestic concerns, he retrenched all the great expenses which his predecessors had entailed on their dignity, which he looked upon as superfluous and an excessive prodigality; and these sums he applied to the relief of the poor, especially of the sick. For this purpose he erected and maintained numerous hospitals, under the government of holy and charitable priests, and was very careful that all the servants and attendants were persons of great virtue, tenderness, compassion, and prudence. His own family being settled in good order, the next thing he took in hand after his promotion was the reformation of his clergy. This he forwarded by zealous protestations and proper rules for their conduct, tending both to their sanctification and exemplarity. And to give these his endeavours their due force, he lived an exact model of what he inculcated to others: but his zeal exasperated the tepid part of that order, and raised a storm against himself. The immodesty of women in their dress in that gay

<sup>1</sup> St Chrys. Hom. 21, ad Pap. Antioch, seu de Statuis. t. ii

<sup>2</sup> Sozom. lib. viii. c. 2, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Socrat. c. 2. See Stilling, § 35, p. 511.

capital excited in him sentiments of the most just abhorrence and indignation. Some young ladies seemed to have forgot that clothing is the covering of the ignominy of sin, and ought to be an instrument of penance, and a motive of confusion and tears, not of vanity. But the exhortations of St Chrysostom moved many to despise and lay aside the use of purple, silks, and jewels. It was a far more intolerable scandal that some neglected to cover their necks, or used such thin veils as served only to invite the eyes of others more boldly. Our saint represented to such persons that they were in some respects worse than public prostitutes: for these hide their baits at home only for the wicked: "but you," said he, "carry your snare everywhere, and spread your nets publicly in all places. You allege that you never invited others to sin. You did not by your tongue, but you have done it by your dress and deportment more effectually than you could by your voice: when you have made another to sin in his heart, how can you be innocent? You sharpened and drew the sword: you gave the thrust by which the soul is wounded.<sup>1</sup> Tell me whom does the world condemn? whom do judges punish? Those who drink the poison, or those who prepare and give the fatal draught? You have mingled the execrable cup; you have administered the potion of death: you are so much more criminal than poisoners, as the death which you cause is the more terrible; for you murder not the body, but the soul. Nor do you do this to enemies; nor compelled by necessity, nor provoked by any injury; but out of a foolish vanity and pride. You sport yourselves in the ruin of the souls of others, and make their spiritual death your pastime." Hence he infers how false and absurd their excuse is in saying they mean no harm. These and many other scandals he abolished. His mildness towards sinners was censured by the Novatians: he invited them to repentance with the compassion of the most tender father, and was accustomed to cry out: "If you are fallen a second time, or even a thousand times into sin, come to me and you shall be healed."<sup>2</sup> But he was firm and severe in maintaining discipline, though without harshness; to impenitent sinners he was inflexible.

To mention one instance of the success of his holy zeal out of the many which his sermons furnish: in the year 399, the second of his episcopacy, on Wednesday in Holy Week, so violent a rain fell as to endanger the corn and threaten the whole produce of the country. Here-upon public processions were made to the church of the apostles by the bishop and people, to avert the scourge by imploring the intercession chiefly of St Peter, St Andrew (who is regarded as the founder of the church of Byzantium), St Paul, and St Timothy. The rain ceased, but not their fears. Therefore they all crossed the Bosphorus to the church

<sup>1</sup> St Chrys. lib. *Quod regulares fœminæ*, t. i. p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Phot. Cod. 59; Socr. lib. vi. c. 21; Stilling, § 40, p. 523.

of SS. Peter and Paul, on the opposite side of the water. This danger was scarce over when on the Friday following many ran to see certain horse-races, and on Holy Saturday to games exhibited at the theatre. The good bishop was pierced to the quick with grief, and on the next day, Easter Sunday, preached a most zealous and eloquent sermon against the games and shows of the theatre and circus. Indignation made him not so much as mention the paschal solemnity; but by an abrupt exordium he burst into the most vehement pathos, as follows: "Are these things to be borne? Can they be tolerated? I appeal to yourselves, be your own judges. Thus did God expostulate with the Jews."<sup>1</sup> This exclamation he often repeated to assuage his grief. He put the people in mind of the sanctity of our faith; of the rigorous account we must give to God of all our moments, and the obligation of serving him incumbent on us from his benefits, who has made for us the heaven and earth, the sun, light, rivers, &c. The saint grieved the more because, after all, they said they had done no harm, though they had murdered not only their own souls, but also those of their children. "And how will you," said he, "after this approach the holy place? How will you touch the heavenly food? Even now do I see you overwhelmed with grief, and covered with confusion. I see some striking their foreheads, perhaps those who have not sinned, but are moved with compassion for their brethren. On this account do I grieve and suffer, that the devil should make such a havoc in such a flock. But if you join with me, we will shut him out. By what means? If we seek out the wounded and snatch them out of his jaws. Do not tell me their number is but small: though they are but ten, this is a great loss: though but five, but two, or only one. The shepherd, leaving ninety-nine, did not return till he had completed his number by recovering that sheep which was lost. Do not say, it is only one; but remember that it is a soul for which all things visible were made; for which laws were given, miracles wrought, and mysteries effected; for which God spared not his only Son. Think how great a price hath been paid for this one sheep, and bring him back to the fold. If he neither hears your persuasions nor my exhortations, I will employ the authority with which God hath invested me." He proceeds to declare such excommunicated. The consternation and penance of the city made the holy pastor forbear any further censure, and to commend their conversion. Palladius writes that he had the satisfaction to see those who had been most passionately fond of the entertainments of the stage and circus, moved by his sermons on that subject, entirely renounce those schools of the devil. God is more glorified by one perfect soul than by many who serve him with tepidity. Therefore, though every individual of his large flock was an object of his most tender affection and pastoral concern, those were particularly so

<sup>1</sup> Mich. vi. 3; Jer. ii. 5.



who had secluded themselves from the world, by embracing a religious state of life, the holy virgins and nuns. Describing their method of life, he says<sup>1</sup> their clothing was sackcloth, and their beds only mats spread on the floor; that they watched part of the night in prayer, walked barefoot, never ate before evening, and never touched so much as bread, using no other food than pulse and herbs, and that they were always occupied in prayer, manual labour, or serving the sick of their own sex. The spiritual mother, and the sun of this holy company, St Nicareta, is honoured December the 27th. Among the holy widows who dedicated themselves to God, under the direction of this great master of saints, the most illustrious were the truly noble ladies St Olympias, Salvina, Procula, and Pantadia. This last (who was the widow of Timasus, formerly the first minister to the emperor) was constituted by him deaconess of the church of Constantinople. Widows he considered as by their state called to a life of penance, retirement, and devotion; and he spared no exhortations or endeavours to engage them faithfully to correspond to the divine grace, according to the advice which St Paul gives them.<sup>2</sup> St Olympias claimed the privilege of furnishing the expenses of the saint's frugal table. He usually ate alone; few would have been willing to dine so late, or so coarsely and sparingly as he did; and he chose this to save both time and expenses; but he kept another table in a house near his palace for the entertainment of strangers, which he took care should be decently supplied. He inveighed exceedingly against sumptuous banquets. All his revenues he laid out on the poor, for whose relief he sold the rich furniture which Nectarius had left; and once, in a great dearth, he caused some of the sacred vessels to be melted down for that purpose. This action was condemned by Theophilus, but is justly regarded by St Austin as a high commendation of our holy prelate. Besides the public hospital near his cathedral, and several others which he founded and maintained, he erected two for strangers. His own patrimony he had given to the poor long before, at Antioch. His extraordinary charities obtained him the name of John of Almsdeeds.<sup>3</sup> The spiritual necessities of his neighbour were objects of far greater compassion to his tender charity. Neither was this pastoral care confined to his own flock or nation: he extended it to the remotest countries. He sent a bishop to instruct the Nomades or wandering Scythians: another, an admirable man, to the Goths. Palestine, Persia, and many other distant provinces felt the most beneficent influence of his zeal. He was himself endued with an eminent spirit of prayer: this he knew to be the great channel of heavenly graces, the cleanser of the affections of the soul from earthly dross, and the means which renders

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 13, in Ephes. t. 11, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Pallad. in Vit. Chrysost. Item S. Chrysost. Hom. in 1 Tim. v. 5, lib. iii. de Sacerd. c. 8, and

<sup>3</sup> ad Vid. junior, Stilting, § 67, p. 603.

<sup>4</sup> Pallad. c. 12.

them spiritual and heavenly, and makes men angels, even in their mortal body. He was therefore particularly earnest in inculcating this duty, and in instructing others in the manner of performing it. He warmly exhorted the laity to rise to the midnight office of matins together with the clergy; "Many artisans," said he, "watch to labour, and soldiers watch as sentries; and cannot you do as much to praise God?"<sup>1</sup> He observes that the silence of the night is peculiarly adapted to devout prayer and the sighs of compunction: which exercise we ought never to interrupt too long; and by watching, prayer becomes more earnest and powerful. Women he will not have to go easily abroad to church in the night-time; but advises that even children rise in the night to say a short prayer, and as they cannot watch long be put to bed again: for thus they will contract from their infancy a habit of watching, and a Christian's whole house will be converted into a church. The advantages and necessity of assiduous prayer he often recommends with singular energy; but he expresses himself on no subject with greater tenderness and force than on the excess of the divine love, which is displayed in the holy Eucharist, and in exhorting the faithful to the frequent use of that heavenly sacrament. St Proclus says<sup>2</sup> that he abridged the liturgy of his church. St Nilus<sup>3</sup> assures us that he was often favoured with visions of angels in the church during the canonical hours, surrounding the altars in troops during the celebration of the divine mysteries, and at the communion of the people. The saint himself confidently avers that this happens at those times,<sup>4</sup> which he confirms by the visions of several hermits.

In the year 400 St Chrysostom held a council of bishops at Constantinople, one of whom had preferred a complaint against his metropolitan, Antoninus, the Archbishop of Ephesus, which consisted of several heads, but that chiefly insisted on was simony.<sup>5</sup> All our saint's endeavours to discuss this affair being frustrated by the distance of places, he found it necessary, at the solicitation of the clergy and people of Ephesus, to go in person to that city, though the severity of the winter season, and the ill state of health he was then in, might be sufficient motives for retarding this journey. In this and the neighbouring cities several councils were held, in which the Archbishop of Ephesus and several other bishops in Asia, Lycia, and Phrygia were deposed for simony. Upon his return after Easter, in 401, having been absent a hundred days, he preached the next morning,<sup>6</sup> calling his people, in the transports of tender joy, his crown, his glory, his paradise, planted with flourishing trees; but if any bad shrubs should be found in it, he promised that no pains should be spared to change them into good. He bid them consider, if they rejoiced so much

<sup>1</sup> Hom. 2 and 25, in Acta; Hom. 14, in Hebr.; Pallad. in Vit. St Chrys.

<sup>2</sup> St Procl. Or. xxii. p. 581. See Le Brun des Liturg.

<sup>3</sup> L. ii. Ep. 294, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Pallad. Dial. p. 127; Stilting, § 42, p. 542.

<sup>5</sup> L. iii. de Sacerd.

<sup>6</sup> T. iii. p. 411.

as they testified to see him again, who was only one, how great his joy must be which was multiplied in every one of them: he calls himself their bond-slave, chained to their service, but says that slavery was his delight, and that during his absence he ever had them present to his mind, offering up his prayers for their temporal and spiritual welfare.

It remained that our saint should glorify God by his sufferings, as he had already done by his labours; and if we contemplate the mysteries of the cross with the eyes of faith, we shall find him greater in the persecutions he sustained than in all the other occurrences of his life. At the same time we cannot sufficiently deplore the blindness of envy and pride in his enemies, as in the Pharisees against Christ himself. We ought to tremble for ourselves; if that passion does not make us persecute a Chrysostom, it may often betray us into rash judgments, aversions, and other sins, even under a cloak of virtue.

The first open adversary of our saint was Severianus, Bishop of Gabala, in Syria, to whom the saint had left the care of his church during his absence. This man had acquired the reputation of a preacher, was a favourite of the empress Eudoxia, and had employed all his talents and dexterity to establish himself in the good opinion of the court and people, to the prejudice of the saint, against whom he had preached in his own city.

Another enemy of the saint was Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, whom Sozomen, Socrates, Palladius, St Isidore of Pelusium, and Synesius accuse of avarice and oppression to gratify his vanity in building stately churches; of pride, envy, revenge, dissimulation, and an uncontrollable lover of power and rule, by which he treated other bishops as his slaves, and made his will the rule of justice. His three paschal letters which have reached us show that he wrote without method, and that his reflections and reasonings were neither just nor apposite, whence the loss of his other writings is not much to be regretted. These spiritual vices sullied his zeal against the Anthropomorphites, and his other virtues. He died in 412, wishing that he had lived always in a desert, honouring the name of the holy Chrysostom, whose picture he caused to be brought to his bedside, and, by reverencing it, showed his desire to make atonement for his past ill conduct towards our saint. This turbulent man had driven from their retreat four abbots of Nitria, called the tall brothers, on a groundless suspicion of Origenism, as appears from Palladius, though it was believed by St Jerom, which is maintained by Baronius. St Chrysostom admitted them to communion, but not till they had juridically cleared themselves of it in an ample manner.<sup>1</sup> This, however, was grievously resented by Theophilus; but the empress Eudoxia, who, after the disgrace of Eutropius, governed her husband and the empire, was the mainspring which moved the whole conspiracy against the saint. Zozimus, a heathen historian,

<sup>1</sup> See Stilting, § 54, 55, 56, p. 567.

says that her flagrant avarice, her extortions and injustices, knew no bounds, and that the court was filled with informers, calumniators, and harpies, who, being always on the watch for prey, found means to seize the estates of such as died rich, and to disinherit their children or other heirs.

No wonder that a saint should displease such a court while he discharged his duty to God. He had preached a sermon against the extravagance and vanity of women in dress and pomp. This was pretended by some to have been levelled at the empress; and Severianus was not wanting to blow the coals. Knowing Theophilus was no friend to the saint, the empress, to be revenged of the supposed affront, sent to desire his presence at Constantinople, in order to depose him. He obeyed the summons with pleasure, and landed at Constantinople in June, 433, with several Egyptian bishops his creatures, refused to see or lodge with John, and got together a packed cabal of thirty-six bishops, the saint's enemies, in a church at Chalcedon, calling themselves the synod at the Oak, from a great tree which gave name to that quarter of the town. The heads of the impeachment drawn up against the holy bishop were, that he had deposed a deacon for beating a servant; that he had called several of his clergy base men; had deposed bishops out of his province; had ordained priests in his domestic chapel, instead of the cathedral; had sold things belonging to the church; that nobody knew what became of his revenues; that he ate alone; and that he gave the holy communion to persons who were not fasting: all of which were false or frivolous. The saint held a legal council of forty bishops in the city at the same time; and refused to appear before that at the Oak, alleging most notorious infractions of the canons in their pretended council. The cabal proceeded to a sentence of deposition, which they sent to the city and to the emperor, to whom they also accused him of treason, for having called the empress Jezabel, a false assertion, as Palladius testifies. The emperor hereupon issued out an order for his banishment, but the execution of it was opposed by the people, who assembled about the great church to guard their pastor. He made them a farewell sermon,<sup>1</sup> in which he spoke as follows: "Violent storms encompass me on all sides; yet I am without fear, because I stand upon a rock. Though the sea roar, and the waves rise high, they cannot sink the vessel of Jesus. I fear not death, which is my gain: nor banishment, for the whole earth is the Lord's: nor the loss of goods; for I came naked into the world, and must leave it in the same condition. I despise all the terrors of the world, and trample upon its smiles and favour. Nor do I desire to live unless for your service. Christ is with me, whom shall I fear? though waves rise against me, though the sea, though the fury of princes threaten me, all these are to me more contemptible than a spider's web. I always say, O Lord, may thy will be done; not what this or that

<sup>1</sup> T. iii. p. 415.

creature wills, but what it shall please thee to appoint, that shall I do and suffer with joy. This is my strong tower: this is my unshaken rock: this is my staff that can never fail. If God be pleased that it be done, let it be so. Whatsoever his will is that I be, I return him thanks." He declared that he was ready to lay down a thousand lives for them, if at his disposal, and that he suffered only because he had neglected nothing to save their souls.

On the third day after the unjust sentence given against him, having received repeated orders from the emperor to go into banishment, and taking all possible care to prevent a sedition, he surrendered himself, unknown to the people, to the Count, who conducted him to Prænenum, in Bithynia. After his departure his enemies entered the city with guards, and Severianus mounted the pulpit, and began to preach, pretending to show the deposition of the saint to have been legal and just. But the people would not suffer him to proceed, and ran about as if distracted, loudly demanding in a body the restoration of their holy pastor. The next night the city was shook with an earthquake. This brought the empress to reflect with remorse on what she had done against the holy bishop. She applied immediately to the emperor, under the greatest consternation, for his being recalled; crying out, "Unless John be recalled, our empire is undone": and with his consent she dispatched letters the same night, inviting him home with tender expressions of affection and esteem, and protesting her ignorance of his banishment. Almost all the city went out to meet him, and great numbers of lighted torches were carried before him. He stopped in the suburbs, refusing to enter the city till he had been declared innocent by a more numerous assembly of bishops. But the people would suffer no delay: the enemies of the saint fled, and he resumed his functions, and preached to his flock. He pressed the emperor to call Theophilus to a legal synod; but that obstinate persecutor alleged that he could not return without danger of his life. However, Sozomen relates that three score bishops ratified his return. But the fair weather did not last long. A silver statue of the empress having been erected on a pillar before the great Church of St Sophia, the dedication of it was celebrated with public games, which, besides disturbing the divine service, engaged the spectators in extravagances and superstition. St Chrysostom had often preached against licentious shows; and the very place rendered these the more criminal. On this occasion, fearing lest his silence should be construed as an approbation of the thing, he with his usual freedom and courage, spoke loudly against it. Though this could only affect the Manichæan overseer of these games, the vanity of the empress made her take the affront to herself, and her desires of revenge were implacable. His enemies were invited back: Theophilus durst not come, but sent three deputies. Though

St John had forty-two bishops with him, this second cabal urged to the emperor certain canons of an Arian council of Antioch, made only to exclude St Athanasius, by which it was ordained that no bishop who had been deposed by a synod should return to his see till he was restored by another synod. This false plea overruled the justice of the saint's cause, and Arcadius sent him an order to withdraw. He refused to forsake a church committed to him by God unless forcibly compelled to leave it. The emperor sent troops to drive the people out of the churches on Holy Saturday, and the holy places were polluted with blood and all manner of outrages. The saint wrote to Pope Innocent, begging him to declare void all that had been done; for no injustice could be more notorious.<sup>1</sup> He also wrote to beg the concurrence of certain other holy bishops of the West. The pope having received from Theophilus the acts of the false council at the Oak, even by them saw the glaring injustice of its proceedings, and wrote to him, exhorting him to appear in another council, where sentence should be given according to the canons of Nice, meaning by those words to condemn the Arian canons of Antioch. He also wrote to St Chrysostom, to his flock, and several of his friends; and endeavoured to redress these evils by a new council, as did also the emperor Honorius. But Arcadius and Eudoxia found means to prevent its assembling, the very dread of which made Theophilus, Severianus, and other ringleaders of the faction to tremble.

St Chrysostom was suffered to remain at Constantinople two months after Easter. On Thursday in Whitsun week the emperor sent him an order for his banishment. The holy man, who received it in the church, said to those about him, "Come, let us pray, and take leave of the angel of the church." He took leave of the bishops, and, stepping into the baptistry, also of St Olympias and the other deaconesses, who were overwhelmed with grief and bathed in tears. He then retired privately out of the church, to prevent a sedition, and was conducted by Lucius, a brutish captain, into Bithynia, and arrived at Nice on the 20th of June, 404. After his departure a fire breaking out burnt down the great church and the senate-house, two buildings which were the glory of the city: but the baptistry was spared by the flames, as it were to justify the saint against his calumniators; for not one of the rich vessels was found wanting. In this senate-house perished the incomparable statues of the Muses from Helicon, and other like ornaments, the most valuable then known: so that Zozimus looks upon this conflagration as the greatest misfortune that had ever befallen that city. Palladius ascribes the fire to the anger of heaven. Many of the saint's friends were put to the most exquisite tortures on this account, but no discovery could be made. The Isaurians plundered Asia, and the Huns several other provinces. Eudoxia ended

<sup>1</sup> Op. t. iii. p. 515; Pallad. Dial.; Stilting, § 58, p. 578.

her life and crimes in childbed on the 6th of October following, five days after a furious hail-storm had made a dreadful havoc in the city. The emperor wrote to St Nilus to recommend himself and his empire to his prayers. The hermit answered him with a liberty of speech which became one who neither hoped nor feared any thing from the world. "How do you hope," said he, "to see Constantinople delivered from the destroying angel of God after such enormities authorized by laws? after having banished the most blessed John, the pillar of the church, the lamp of truth, the trumpet of Jesus Christ!"<sup>1</sup> And again: "You have banished John, the greatest light of the earth: at least do not persevere in your crime."<sup>2</sup> His brother the emperor Honourius wrote still in stronger terms,<sup>3</sup> and several others. But in vain: for certain implacable court ladies and sycophants, hardened against all admonitions and remorse, had much too powerful an ascendant over the unhappy emperor for these efforts of the saint's friends to meet with success. Arsacius, his enemy and persecutor, though naturally a soft and weak man, was by the emperor's authority intruded into his see. The saint enjoyed himself comfortably at Nice: but Cucusus was pitched upon by Eudoxia for the place of his banishment. He set out from Nice in July 404, and suffered incredible hardships from heats, fatigues, severity of guards, almost perpetual watchings, and a fever which soon seized him with pains in his breast. He was forced to travel almost all night, deprived of every necessary of life, and was wonderfully refreshed if he got a little clear water to drink, fresh bread to eat, or a bed to take a little rest upon. All he lamented was the impenitence of his enemies, for their own sakes—calling impunity in sin, and honour conferred by men on that account, the most dreadful of all judgments.<sup>4</sup> About the end of August, after a seventy days' journey, he arrived at Cucusus, a poor town in Armenia, in the deserts of Mount Taurus. The good bishop of the place vied with his people in showing the man of God the greatest marks of veneration and civility, and many friends met him there both from Constantinople and Antioch. In this place, by sending missionaries and succours, he promoted the conversion of many heathen countries, especially among the Goths, in Persia and Phœnicia. He appointed Constantius, his friend, a priest of Antioch, superior of the apostolic missions in Phœnicia and Arabia. The letters of Constantius are added to those of St Chrysostom. The seventeen letters of our saint to St Olympias might be styled treatises. He tells her,<sup>5</sup> "I daily exult and am transported with joy in my heart under my sufferings, in which I find a hidden treasure: and I beg that you rejoice on the same account, and that you bless and praise God, by whose mercy we obtain to such a degree the grace of suffering." He often enlarges on

<sup>1</sup> St Nilus, lib. ii. ep. 265.<sup>4</sup> Ep. 8.<sup>2</sup> Lib. iii. ep. 279.<sup>3</sup> Ep. 8, p. 589.<sup>5</sup> T. iii. p. 523.

the great evils and most pernicious consequences of sadness and dejection of spirit, which he calls<sup>1</sup> "the worst of human evils, a perpetual domestic rack, a darkness and tempest of the mind, an interior war, a distemper which consumes the vigour of the soul, and impairs all her faculties." He shows<sup>2</sup> that sickness is the greatest of trials, a time not of inaction, but of the greatest merit, the school of all virtues, and a true martyrdom. He advises her to use physic, and says it would be a criminal impatience to wish for death to be freed from sufferings. He laments the fall of Pelagius, whose heresies he abhorred. He wrote to this lady his excellent treatise, "That no one can hurt him who does not hurt himself." Arsacius dying in 405, many ambitiously aspired to that dignity, whose very seeking it was sufficient to prove them unworthy. Atticus, one of this number, a violent enemy to St Chrysostom, was preferred by the court, and placed in his chair. The pope refused to hold communion with Theophilus or any of the abettors of the persecution of our saint.<sup>3</sup> He and the emperor Honorius sent five bishops to Constantinople to insist on a council, and that in the meantime St Chrysostom should be restored to his see, his deposition having been notoriously unjust.<sup>4</sup> But the deputies were cast into prison in Thrace, because they refused to communicate with Atticus. The persecutors saw that, if a council were held, they would be inevitably condemned and deposed by it, therefore they stuck at nothing to prevent its meeting. The incursions of the Isaurian plunderers obliged St Chrysostom to take shelter in the castle of Arabissus, on Mount Taurus. He enjoyed a tolerable state of health during the year 406 and the winter following, though it was extremely cold in those mountains, so that the Armenians were surprised to see how his thin, weak body was able to support it. When the Isaurians had quitted the neighbourhood, he returned to Cucusus. But his impious enemies, seeing the whole Christian world both honour and defend him, resolved to rid the world of him. With this view they procured an order from the emperor that he should be removed to Arabissus, and thence to Pytius, a town situated on the Euxine Sea, near Colchis, at the extremity of the empire, on the frontiers of the Sarmatians, the most barbarous of the Scythians. Two officers were ordered to convey him thither in a limited number of days, through very rough roads, with a promise of promotion if, by hard usage, he should die in their hands. One of these was not altogether destitute of humanity, but the other could not bear to hear a mild word spoken to him. They often travelled amidst scorching heats, from which his head, that was bald, suffered exceedingly. In the most violent rains they forced him out of doors, obliging him to travel till the water ran in streams down his back and bosom. When they arrived at Comana Pontica, in Cappadocia,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 3, p. 552.<sup>2</sup> Pallad. Theodoret, lib. v. c. 34.<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 4, p. 570.<sup>4</sup> Pallad. Sozom. lib. viii. c. 28.



he was very sick; yet was hurried five or six miles to the martyrion or chapel in which lay the relics of the martyr St Basiliscus. The saint was lodged in the oratory of the priest. In the night, that holy martyr appearing to him said, "Be of good courage, brother John; to-morrow we shall be together." The confessor was filled with joy at this news, and begged that he might stay there till eleven o'clock. This made the guards drag him out the more violently; but when they had travelled four miles, perceiving him in a dying condition, they brought him back to the oratory. He there changed all his clothes to his very shoes, putting on his best attire, which was all white, as if he meant it for his heavenly nuptials. He was yet fasting, and having received the holy sacrament, poured forth his last prayer, which he closed with his usual doxology: Glory be to God for all things. Having said Amen, and signed himself with the sign of the cross, he sweetly gave up his soul to God on the feast of the exaltation of the holy cross, the 14th of September, as appears from the Menæa, in 407, having been bishop nine years and almost seven months.

His remains were interred by the body of St Basiliscus, a great concourse of holy virgins, monks, and persons of all ranks from a great distance flocking to his funeral. The pope refused all communion with those who would not allow his name a place in the Dyptics or registers of Catholic bishops deceased. It was inserted at Constantinople by Atticus in 417, and at Alexandria by St Cyril in 419: for Nestorius tells him that he then venerated the ashes of John against his will.<sup>1</sup> His body was translated to Constantinople in 434, by St Proclus, with the utmost pomp, the emperor Theodosius and his sister Pulcheria accompanying St Proclus in the procession, and begging pardon for the sins of their parents, who had unadvisedly persecuted this servant of God. The precious remains were laid in the church of the apostles, the burying-place of the emperors and bishops, on the 27th of January, 438; on which day he is honoured by the Latins, but the Greeks keep his festival on the 13th of November.<sup>2</sup> His ashes were afterwards carried to Rome, and rest under an altar which bears his name in the Vatican church. The saint was low in stature; and his thin, mortified countenance bespoke the severity of his life. The austerities of his youth, his cold solitary abode in the mountains, and the fatigues of continual preaching, had weakened his breast, which occasioned his frequent distempers. But the hardships of his exile were such as must have destroyed a person of the most robust constitution. Pope Celestine, St Austin, St Nilus, St Isidore of Pelusium, and others, call him the illustrious doctor of churches, whose glory shines on every side, who fills the earth with the light of his profound sacred learning, and who

<sup>1</sup> Nestorius, Or. 12, apud Marium Mercat. par. 2, p. 86, ed. Garnier. Stilling, § 88, p. 695.  
<sup>2</sup> Jos. Assemani. Comm. in Calend. Univ. t. vi. p. 105, and Stilling.

instructs by his works the remotest corners of the world, preaching everywhere, even where his voice could not reach. They style him the wise interpreter of the secrets of God, the sun of the whole universe, the lamp of virtue, and the most shining star of the earth. The incomparable writings of this glorious saint make his standing and most authentic eulogium.

In the character which St Chrysostom has in several places drawn of divine and fraternal charity and holy zeal, we have a true portraiture of his holy soul. He excellently shows, from the words of our Lord to St Peter,<sup>1</sup> that the primary and essential disposition of a pastor of souls is a pure and most ardent love of God, whose love for these souls is so great that he has delivered his son to death for them. Jesus Christ shed his blood to save his flock, which he commits to the care of St Peter. Nothing can be stronger or more tender than the manner in which this saint frequently expresses his charity and solicitude for his spiritual children.<sup>2</sup> When he touches this topic, his words are all fire and flame, and seem to breathe the fervour of St Peter, the zeal of St Paul, and the charity of Moses. This favourite of God was not afraid, for the salvation of his people, to desire to be separated from the company of the saints, provided this could have been done without falling from the love of God; though he knew that nothing would more closely unite him for ever to God than this extraordinary effort of his love. The apostle of nations desired to be an anathema for his brethren, and for their salvation;<sup>3</sup> and the prince of the apostles gave the strongest proof of the ardour of his love for Christ by the floods of tears which he shed for his flock. From the same furnace of divine love St Chrysostom drew the like sentiments towards his flock, joined with a sovereign contempt of all earthly things—another distinguishing property of charity, which he describes in the following words,<sup>4</sup> “Those who burn with a spiritual love consider as nothing all that is shining or precious on earth. We are not to be surprised if we understand not this language, who have no experience of this sublime virtue. For whoever should be inflamed with the fire of the perfect love of Jesus Christ would be in such dispositions with regard to the earth that he would be indifferent both to its honours and to its disgrace, and would be no more concerned about its trifles than if he was alone in the world. He would despise sufferings, scourges, and dungeons as if they were endured in another’s body, not in his own; and would be as insensible to the pleasures and enjoyments of the world as we are to the bodies of the dead, or as the dead are to their own bodies. He would be as pure from the stain of any inordinate passions as gold perfectly refined is from all rust or spot. And as flies bewa

<sup>1</sup> Joan, xxi. 17; St Chrys. lib. ii. de Sacerd. c. i.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. 3 and 44, in Acta. et alibi sæpe.

<sup>3</sup> See St Chrys. Hom. 16, in Rom.

<sup>4</sup> Hom. 52, in Acta.

of falling into the flames, and keep at a distance, so irregular passions dare not approach him."

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 27 :*

ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM : BLESSED JOHN OF WARNETON, Bishop of Therouanne : ST JULIAN, first Bishop of Le Mans, Confessor : ST MARIUS, Abbot, who spent the forty days of Lent as a recluse in the forest, every year, where he experienced prophetic visions : and ST VITALIAN, pope, 657-72, who sought to restore the connection with Constantinople. He was successful in England where disputes had arisen between the Anglo-Saxons and the British clergy respecting ecclesiastical customs.

## JANUARY 28

### ST CYRIL, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA

(A.D. 444)

[From Socrates, Marius Mercator, the councils, and his works. See Tillemont, t. xiv. p. 272 ; Ceillier, t. xiii. p. 241.]

ST CYRIL was raised by God to defend the faith of the Incarnation of his Son, "of which mystery he is styled the doctor, as St Austin is of that of grace," says Thomassin. He studied under his uncle Theophilus, and testifies<sup>1</sup> that he made it his rule never to advance any doctrine which he had not learned from the ancient Fathers. His books against Julian the Apostate show that he had read the profane writers. He often says himself that he neglected human eloquence: and it is to be wished that he had wrote in a clearer style, and with greater purity of the Greek tongue. Upon the death of Theophilus, in 412, he was raised by the people to the patriarchal dignity. He began to exert his authority by causing the churches of the Novatians in the city to be shut up, and their sacred vessels and ornaments to be seized, an action censured by Socrates, a favourer of those heretics; but we do not know the reasons and authority upon which he proceeded. He next drove the Jews out of the city, who were very numerous, and enjoyed great privileges there from the time of Alexander the Great. Seditions and several acts of violence committed by them excited him to this, which grievously offended Orestes the governor, but was approved by the emperor Theodosius: and the Jews never returned. St Cyril sent to conjure the governor by the holy gospels that he would consent to a reconciliation, and that he would join in sincere friendship with him; but his offers were rejected. This unhappy disagreement produced pernicious effects. Hypatia, a pagan lady, kept a public school of philosophy in the city. Her reputation for learning was so great that disciples flocked to her from all parts. Among these was the great Synesius, who afterwards submitted his works to her censure. She was consulted by philosophers of the first rank on the most intricate points of learning, and of the Platonic philosophy in particular, in which she was remarkably well versed.<sup>2</sup> She was much respected and consulted

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 56 and 35, apud Lupum.

<sup>2</sup> Synesius, ep. 153.

by the governor, and often visited him. The mob, which was nowhere more unruly or more fond of riots and tumults than in that populous city, the second in the world for extent, upon a suspicion that she incensed the governor against their bishop, seditiously rose, pulled her out of her chariot, cut and mangled her flesh, and tore her body in pieces in the streets, in 415, to the great grief and scandal of all good men, especially of the pious bishop.<sup>1</sup> He had imbibed certain prejudices from his uncle against the great St Chrysostom; but was prevailed on by St Isidore of Pelusium and others to insert his name in the Dyptics of his church in 419, after which Pope Zozimus sent him letters of communion.

Nestorius, a monk and priest of Antioch, was made Bishop of Constantinople in 428. The retiredness and severity of his life, joined with an hypocritical exterior of virtue, a superficial learning, and a fluency of words, gained him some reputation in the world. But being full of self-conceit, he neglected the study of the Fathers, was a man of weak judgment, extremely vain, violent, and obstinate. This is the character he bears in the history of those times, and which is given him by Socrates, and also by Theodoret, whom he had formerly imposed upon by his hypocrisy. Marius Mercator informs us that he was no sonner placed in the episcopal chair but he began to persecute, with great fury, the Arians, Macedonians, Manichees, and Quartodecimans, whom he banished out of his diocese. But though he taught original sin, he is said to have denied the necessity of grace; on which account he received to his communion Celestius and Julian, who had been condemned by the Popes Innocent and Zozimus, and banished out of the West by the emperor Honorius, for Pelagianism. Theodosius obliged them to leave Constantinople, notwithstanding the protection of the bishop. Nestorius and his mercenary priests broached also new errors from the pulpit, teaching two distinct persons in Christ, that of God and that of man, only joined by a moral union, by which he said the Godhead dwelt in the humanity merely as in its temple. Hence he denied the Incarnation, or that God was made man: and said the Blessed Virgin ought not to be styled the Mother of God, but of the man who was Christ, whose humanity was only the temple of the divinity, not a nature hypostatically assumed by the divine Person; though at length convicted by the voice of antiquity, he allowed her the empty title of Mother of God, but continued to deny the mystery. The people were shocked at these novelties, and the priests, St Proclus, Eusebius, afterwards Bishop of Dorylæum, and others, separated themselves from his communion, after having attempted in vain to reclaim him by remonstrances. His homilies, wherever they appeared, gave great offence, and excited everywhere clamours against the errors and blasphemies they contained.

<sup>1</sup> Vie d'Hypacé par l'Abbé Goujet. Mémoires de Littérature, t. v.

St Cyril having read them, sent him a mild expostulation on the subject, but was answered with haughtiness and contempt. Pope Celestine, being applied to by both parties, examined his doctrine in a council at Rome, condemned it, and pronounced a sentence of excommunication and deposition against the author, unless within ten days after notification of the sentence he publicly condemned and retracted it, appointing St Cyril as his vicegerent in this affair, to see that the sentence was put in execution.<sup>1</sup> Our saint, together with his third and last summons, sent Nestorius twelve propositions with anathemas, hence called anathematisms, to be signed by him as a proof of his orthodoxy, but the heresiarch appeared more obstinate than ever. This occasioned the calling of the third general council opened at Ephesus, in 431, by two hundred bishops, with St Cyril at their head, as Pope Celestine's legate and representative. Nestorius, though in the town, and thrice cited, refused to appear. His heretical sermons were read, and depositions received against him, after which his doctrine was condemned, and the sentence of excommunication and deposition was pronounced against him and notified to the emperor.

Six days after, John, Patriarch of Antioch, arrived at Ephesus with forty-one oriental bishops, who secretly favouring the person but not the errors of Nestorius, of which they deemed him innocent, had advanced but slowly on their journey to the place. Instead of associating with the council, they assembled by themselves, and presumed to excommunicate St Cyril and his adherents. Both sides had recourse to the emperor for redress, by whose order, soon after, St Cyril and Nestorius were both arrested and confined, but our saint the worst treated of the two. Nay, through his antagonist's greater interest at court, he was upon the point of being banished, when three legates from Pope Celestine, Arcadius and Projectus, bishops, and Philip, a priest, arrived at Ephesus, which gave a new turn to affairs in our saint's favour. The three new legates having considered what had been done under St Cyril, the condemnation of Nestorius was confirmed, the saint's conduct approved, and the sentence pronounced against him declared null and invalid. Thus, matters being cleared up, he was enlarged with honour. The Orientals, indeed, continued their schism till 433, when they made their peace with St Cyril, condemned Nestorius, and gave a clear and orthodox exposition of their faith. That heresiarch, being banished from his see, retired to his monastery in Antioch. John, though formerly his friend, yet finding him very perverse and obstinate in his heresy, and attempting to pervert others, entreated the emperor Theodosius to remove him. He was therefore banished to Oasis, in the deserts of Upper Egypt, on the borders of Libya, in 431, and died miserably and impenitent in his exile. His sect remains to this

<sup>1</sup> Conc. t. iii. p. 343; Liberat. in Breviar. c. 4.

day very numerous in the East. St Cyril triumphed over this heresiarch by his meekness, intrepidity, and courage; thanking God for his sufferings, and professing himself ready to spill his blood with joy for the gospel.<sup>1</sup> He arrived at Alexandria on the 30th of October, 431, and spent the remainder of his days in maintaining the faith of the church in its purity, in promoting peace and union among the faithful, and the zealous labours of his pastoral charge, till his glorious death in 444, on the 28th of June, that is, the 3rd of the Egyptian month Epiphi, as the Alexandrians, the Copts, and the Ethiopians unanimously affirm, who by abridging his name call him Kerlos, and give him the title of Doctor of the world. The Greeks keep the 18th of January in his honour, and have a second commemoration of him again on the 9th of June.<sup>2</sup> The Roman Martyrology mentions him on this day. Pope Celestine styles him, "The generous defender of the church and faith, the Catholic doctor, and an apostolical man."<sup>3</sup>

The extraordinary devotion of this holy doctor toward the holy sacrament appears from the zeal with which he frequently inculcates the glorious effects which it produces in the soul of him who worthily receives it, especially in healing all his spiritual disorders, strengthening him against temptations, subduing the passions, giving life, and making us one with Christ by the most sacred union, not only in spirit, but also with his humanity.<sup>4</sup> Hence this father says that by the holy communion we are made concorporeal with Christ. The eminent dignity and privileges of the ever-glorious Virgin Mary were likewise a favourite subject on which he often dwells.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 28 :*

ST AGNES, her second commemoration. See her LIFE, January 21. BLESSED ANTHONY OF AMANDOLA : BLESSED CHARLEMAGNE, Emperor : ST CYRIL : BLESSED GILES of Lorenzana : BLESSED JAMES, the Almsgiver : ST JOHN, Abbot of Reomay, who took the monastic habit at Lerins and later founded Reomay. He was one of the pioneers of the monastic state in France and lived to be over a hundred : BLESSED MARY MANCINI, widow : BLESSED MARGARET of Hungary, daughter of King Bela IV, consecrated to God by a vow of her parents, professed a nun at an early age and soon outstripped the most advanced in devotion. She delighted to serve everybody ; from infancy she had an ardent devotion to her crucified Redeemer and a profound affection for His Holy Name ; was favoured with the gift of miracles and of prophecy ; gave up her pure soul to God in her twenty-eighth year on January 18, 1271. Never canonised, she is honoured by an office in all the churches of Hungary : BLESSED ODORIC of Pordenone, Confessor : and ST PAULINUS, patriarch of Aquileia : and BLESSED ROGER of Todi.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ad Theopomp. t. iii. ; Conc. p. 771.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, "On the present state of the Greek Church," p. 13. Thomassin Tr. des Fêtes, lib. i. ch. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Conc. t. iii. p. 1077.

<sup>4</sup> L. iv. contra Nestor. t. vi. parte 1, p. 110 ; lib. vii. de adoratione in spiritu et verit. t. i. p. 231 ; lib. x. in Joan. t. iv. c. 13.

JANUARY 29

## ST FRANCIS OF SALES, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1622)

[From his writings and authentic lives, chiefly that written by his nephew, Charles Augustus de Sales; also that by F. Goulou, general of the Feuillans; that by Henry de Maupas du Tour, Bishop of Puy, afterwards of Evreux; and that by Madame de Bussi-Rabutin, nun of the Visitation. See his life, collected by M. Marsoillier, and done into English by the late Mr Crathorne. See also the bull of his canonisation, and an excellent collection of his maxims and private actions, compiled by his intimate friend and great admirer, M. Peter Camus, Bishop of Bellay, in his book, entitled, "L'Esprit de St François de Sales," and in his scarce and incomparable book, under the title, "Quel est le meilleur Gouvernement, le rigoureux ou le doux," printed at Paris, without the name of the author, 1636. Though I find not this book in any catalogue of Bishop Camus's works, the conformity of the style, and in several places the repetition of the same expressions which occur in the last-mentioned work, seem to prove this to be also the production of his pen. See also the excellent new edition of the "Letters of St Francis of Sales," in six volumes, 12mo., 1758.]

THE parents of this saint were Francis, Count of Sales, and Frances of Sionas. The countess, being with child, offered her fruit to God with the most fervent prayers, begging he would preserve it from the corruption of the world, and rather deprive her of the comfort of seeing herself a mother than suffer her to give birth to a child who should ever become his enemy by sin. The saint was born at Sales, three leagues from Annecy, the seat of that noble family, and his mother was delivered of him when she was but seven months advanced in her pregnancy.<sup>1</sup> Hence he was reared with difficulty, and was so weak that his life during his infancy was often despaired of by physicians. However, he escaped the danger, and grew robust: he was very beautiful, and the sweetness of his countenance won the affections of all who saw him: but the meekness of his temper, the pregnancy of his wit, his modesty, tractableness, and obedience, were far more valuable qualifications. The countess could scarce suffer the child out of her sight, lest any tincture of vice might infect his soul. Her first care was to inspire him with the most profound respect for the church and all holy things. She read to him the lives of the saints, adding recollections suited to his capacity; and she took care to have him with her when she visited the poor, making him the distributor of her alms, and to do such little offices for them as he was able. His horror of a lie, even in his infancy, made him prefer any disgrace or chastisement to the telling of the least wilful untruth.

His mother's inclination for a domestic preceptor, to prevent his being corrupted by wicked youth in colleges, was overruled by her husband's persuasion of the usefulness of emulation for advancing children in their studies, hoping his son's virtue and modesty would, under God, be a sufficient guard of his innocence. He was accordingly sent to Rocheville at six years of age, and some time after to Annecy. An excellent memory,

<sup>1</sup> It is a problem in nature, discussed without success by several great physicians, why children born in their seventh month more frequently live than those that are brought forth in their eighth month.

a solid judgment, and a good application, could not fail of great progress. The young count spent as much of his time as possible in private studies and lectures of piety, especially that of the lives of saints, and by his diligence always doubled or trebled his school tasks. He showed an early inclination for the ecclesiastical state, and obtained his father's consent, though not without some reluctance, for his receiving tonsure in the year 1578, and the eleventh of his age. He was sent afterwards, under the care of a virtuous priest, his preceptor, to pursue his studies in Paris, his mother having first instilled into him steady principles of virtue, a love of prayer, and a dread of sin and its occasions. She often repeated to him those words of Queen Blanche to her son, St Louis, King of France: "I had rather see you dead than hear you had committed one mortal sin." On his arrival at Paris, he entered the Jesuits' schools, and went through his rhetoric and philosophy with great applause. In pure obedience to his father's orders, he learned in the academy to ride, dance, and fence, whence he acquired that easy behaviour which he retained ever after. But these exercises, as matter of amusement, did not hinder his close application to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, and of positive divinity, for six years, under the famous Genebrard and Maldonatus. But his principal concern all this time was a regular course of piety, by which he laboured to sanctify himself and all his actions. Pious meditation and the study of the holy scripture were his beloved entertainments; and he never failed to carry about him that excellent book, called "The Spiritual Combat." He sought the conversation of the virtuous, particularly of F. Angelus Joyeuse, who, from a duke and marshal of France, was become a Capuchin friar. The frequent discourses of this good man on the necessity of mortification induced the count to add to his usual austerities the wearing of a hair shirt three days in the week. His chief resort during his stay at Paris was to some churches, that especially of St Stephen des Grez, as being one of the most retired. Here he made a vow of perpetual chastity, putting himself under the special patronage of the Blessed Virgin. God, to purify his heart, permitted a thick darkness insensibly to overspread his mind, and a spiritual dryness and melancholy to overwhelm him. He seemed, from a perfect tranquillity and peace of mind, to be almost brought to the brink of despair. Seized with the greatest terrors, he passed nights and days in tears and lamentations, and suffered more than can be conceived by those who have not felt the severity of such interior conflicts. The bitterness of his grief threw him into a deep jaundice; he could neither eat, drink, nor sleep. His preceptor laboured, but all in vain, to discover the cause of this disorder and find out a remedy. At last Francis, being at prayer in the same Church of St Stephen, cast his eyes on a picture of our Lady; this awaking his confidence in her intercession, he prostrated himself on the ground, and, as unworthy to



address the Father of all consolation, begged that she would be his advocate, and procure him the grace to love God with his whole heart. That very moment he found himself eased of his grief as of a heavy weight taken off his heart, and his former peace and tranquillity restored, which he ever after enjoyed. He was now eighteen years old, when his father recalled him from Paris and sent him to Padua, to study the law, where his master was the celebrated Guy Pancirola; this was in the year 1554. He chose the learned and pious Jesuit, Antony Possevin, for his spiritual director, who at the same time explained to him St Thomas's Sum, and they read together Bellarmin's Controversies. His nephew, Augustus, gives us his written rule of life, which he made at Padua; it chiefly shows his perpetual attention to the presence of God, his care to offer up every action to him and implore his aid at the beginning of each. Falling sick, he was despaired of by the physicians, and he himself expected with joy his last moment. His preceptor, Deage, who had ever attended him, asked him with tears what he had to order about his funeral and other matters. "Nothing," answered he cheerfully, "unless it be that my body be given to the anatomy theatre to be dissected, for it will be a comfort to me if I can be of any advantage when dead, having been of none whilst alive. Thus I may also prevent some of the disorders and quarrels which happen between the young physicians and the friends of the dead, whose bodies they often dig up." However, he recovered, and, by his father's orders, being twenty years of age, commenced doctor in laws, with great applause and pomp, in presence of forty-eight doctors. After which he travelled through Italy to see the antiquities, and visit the holy places there. He went to Rome by Ferrara, and returned by Loretto and Venice. To any insult offered him on the road he returned only meekness, for which he met with remarkable blessings from heaven. The sight of the pompous remains of ancient Rome gave him a feeling contempt of worldly grandeur; but the tombs of the martyrs drew every where tears of devotion from his eyes. Upon his return, his father received him with great joy at his Castle of Tuille, where he had prepared for him a good library of books.

All persons were charmed with the young count, but none so much as the great Antony Favre, afterwards first president of the parliament of Chamberry, and Claudius Cranier, the learned and truly apostolic Bishop of Geneva, who already consulted him as an oracle. His father had a very good match in view for him, and obtained in his behalf, from the Duke of Savoy, patents creating him counsellor of the parliament of Chamberry. Francis modestly, but very firmly, refused both, yet durst not propose to his parents his design of receiving holy orders; for the tonsure was not an absolute renouncing of the world. At last he discovered it to his pious preceptor, Deage, and begged of him to mention it to his father, but this he declined, and used his utmost endeavours to dissuade

the young count from such a resolution, as he was the eldest son, and destined by the order of nature for another state. Francis answered all his reasonings, but could not prevail on him to charge himself with the commission. He had then recourse to a cousin, Louis of Sales, a priest and canon of Geneva, who obtained the consent of his parents, but not without the greatest difficulty. His cousin also obtained for him from the pope, without his knowledge, the provostship of the church of Geneva, then vacant, but the young clergyman held out a long time before he would accept of it. At last he yielded, and took possession of that dignity, and was in a short time after promoted to holy orders by his diocesan, who, as soon as he was deacon, employed him in preaching. His first sermons gained him an extraordinary reputation, and were accompanied with incredible success. He delivered the word of God with a mixture of majesty and modesty, had a strong, sweet voice, and an animated manner of gesture, far from any affectation or vanity; but what chiefly affected the hearts of his hearers was the humility and unction with which he spoke from the abundance of his own heart. Before he preached he always renewed the fervour of his heart before God by secret sighs and prayer. He studied as much at the foot of the crucifix as in books, being persuaded that the essential quality of a preacher is to be a man of prayer. He received the holy order of priesthood with extraordinary preparation and devotion, and seemed filled by it with an apostolical spirit. He every day began his functions by celebrating the holy mysteries early in the morning, in which, by his eyes and countenance of fire, the inward flames of his soul appeared. He then heard the confessions of all sorts of people, and preached. He was observed to decline with the utmost care whatever might gain him the applause of men, seeking only to please God and to advance his glory. He chiefly resorted to cottages and country villages, instructing an infinity of poor people. His piety, his charity to the poor, his disinterestedness, his care of the sick and those in prison, endeared him to all; but nothing was so moving as his meekness, which no provocation was ever capable of disturbing. He conversed among all as their father, with a fellow-feeling of all their wants, being all to all. He was indeed naturally of a hasty and passionate temper, as he himself confesses; and we find in his writings a certain fire and impetuosity which renders it unquestionable. On this account, from his youth he made meekness his favourite virtue, and by studying in the school of a God who was meek and humble of heart. The Calvinists ascribed principally to his meekness the wonderful conversions he made amongst them. St Francis converted no less than seventy-two thousand of them.

Before the end of this first year of his ministry, in 1591, he erected at Annecy a confraternity of the Holy Cross, the associates of which were obliged to instruct the ignorant, to comfort and exhort the sick and

prisoners, and to beware of all law-suits, which seldom fail to shipwreck Christian charity. A Calvinistical minister took occasion from this institution to write against the honour paid by catholics to the cross. Francis answered him by his book entitled, "The Standard of the Cross." At this time fresh matter presented itself for the exercise of the saint's zeal. The Bishop of Geneva was formerly lord of that city, paying an acknowledgment to the Duke of Savoy. While these two were disputing about the sovereignty, the Genevans expelled them both, and formed themselves into a republic in alliance with the Switzers; and their city became the centre of Calvinism. Soon after, the protestant canon of Bern seized the country of Vaux and the republic of Geneva, the duchy of Chablais, with the bailiwicks of Gex, Terni and Gaillard; and there by violence established their heresy, which from that time had kept quiet possession for sixty years. The Duke Charles Emmanuel had recovered these territories, and resolving to restore the catholic religion, wrote, in 1594, to the Bishop of Geneva, to recommend that work to him. The wise ones, according to this world, regarded the undertaking as impracticable; and the most resolute, whether ecclesiastics or religious, were terrified at its difficulties and dangers. Francis was the only one that offered himself for the work, and was joined by none but his cousin-german Lewis de Sales. The tears and remonstrances of his parents and friends to dissuade him from the undertaking made no impression on his courageous soul. He set out with his cousin on the 9th of September, in 1594. Being arrived on the frontiers of Chablais, they sent back their horses the more perfectly to imitate the apostles. On his arrival at Thonon, the capital of Chablais, situate on the Lake of Geneva, he found in it only seven catholics. After having commended the souls to God, and earnestly implored his mercy through the intercession of the guardian angels and tutelar saints of the country, he was obliged to take up his quarters in the castle of Alligens, where the governor and garrison were catholics, two leagues from Thonon, whither he went every day, visiting also the neighbouring country. The Calvinists for a long time shunned him, and some even attempted his life. Two assassins, hired by others, having missed him at Thonon, lay in wait to murder him on his return; but a guard of soldiers had been sent to escort him safe, the conspiracy having taken wind. The saint obtained their pardon, and overcome by his lenity and formed by his holy instructions, they both became very virtuous converts. All our saint's relations, and many friends, whom he particularly respected for their great virtue and prudence, solicited him by the most pressing letters to abandon such a dangerous and fruitless enterprise. His father, to the most tender entreaties, added his positive commands to him to return home, telling him that all prudent persons called his resolution to continue his mission a foolish obstinacy and madness; that he had already done more

than was needful, and that his mother was dying of grief for his long absence, the fear of losing him entirely, and the hardships, atrocious slanders, and continual alarms and dangers in which he lived. To compel him to abandon this undertaking, the father forbade his friends to write any more to him, or to send him necessary supplies. Nevertheless St Francis persevered, and at length his patience, zeal, and eminent virtue wrought upon the most obdurate, and insensibly wore away their prejudices. His first converts were among the soldiers, whom he brought over, not only to the faith, but also to an entire change of manners and strict virtue, from habits of swearing, duelling, and drunkenness. He was near four years, however, without any great fruit among the inhabitants, till the year 1597, when God was pleased to touch several of them with his grace. The harvest daily increased both in town and country, so plentifully that a supply of new labourers from Annecy was necessary, and the bishop sent some Jesuits and Capuchins to carry on the good work with Francis, and under his direction. In 1598 the public exercise of the catholic religion was restored and Calvinism banished by the duke's orders over all Chablais and the two bailiwicks of Terni and Gaillard. Though the plague raged violently at Thonon, this did not hinder Francis either by day or night from assisting the sick in their last moments; and God preserved him from the contagion, which seized and swept off several of his fellow-labourers. In 1597 he was commissioned by Pope Clement VIII to confer with Theodore Beza at Geneva, the most famous minister of the Calvinist party, in order to win him back to the catholic church. He accordingly paid him four visits in that city, gained a high place in that heresiarch's esteem, and made him often hesitate in deep silence and with distracted looks, whether he should return to the Roman catholic church or not, wherein he owned from the beginning that salvation was attainable. St Francis had great hopes of bringing him over in a fifth visit, but his private conferences had alarmed the Genevans so much that they guarded Beza too close for him to find admittance to him again, and Beza died soon after. 'Tis said, that a little before death he lamented very much he could not see Francis.<sup>1</sup> It is certain, from his first conference with him, he had ever felt a violent conflict within himself, between truth and duty on one hand; and on the other, the pride of being head of a party, the shame of recanting, inveterate habits, and certain secret engagements in vice, to which he continued enslaved to the last. The invincible firmness and constancy of the saint appeared in the recovery of the revenues of the curacies and other benefices which had been given to the orders of St Lazarus and St Maurice; the restoration of which after many difficulties he effected by the joint authority of the pope and the Duke of Savoy. In 1569 he celebrated mass on Christmas-day in the Church of St

<sup>1</sup> Aug. Sales in Vit. lib. iii. p. 123.

Hippolytus at Thonon, and had then made seven or eight hundred converts. From this time he charged himself with the parish of the town, and established two other catholic parishes in the country. In the beginning of the year 1599 he had settled zealous clergymen in all the parishes of the whole territory.

The honours the saint received from the pope, the Duke of Savoy, the Cardinal of Medicis, and all the church, and the high reputation which his virtues had acquired him, never made the least impression on his humble mind, dead to all motions of pride and vanity. His delight was with the poor: the most honourable functions he left to others, and chose for himself the meanest and most laborious. Every one desired to have him for their director, wherever he went: and his extraordinary sweetness, in conjunction with his eminent piety, reclaimed as many vicious catholics as it converted heretics. In 1599, he went to Annecy to visit his diocesan, Granier, who had procured him to be made his coadjutor. The fear of resisting God, in refusing this charge, when pressed upon him by the pope, in conjunction with his bishop and the Duke of Savoy, at last extorted his consent; but the apprehension of the obligations annexed to episcopacy was so strong that it threw him into an illness which had like to have cost him his life. On his recovery he set out for Rome to receive his bulls, and to confer with his holiness on matters relating to the mission to Savoy. He was highly honoured by all the great men at Rome, and received of the pope the bulls for being consecrated Bishop of Nicopolis and Coadjutor of Geneva. On this occasion he made a visit of devotion to Loretto, and returned to Annecy before the end of the year 1599. Here he preached the Lent the year following, and assisted his father during his last sickness, heard his general confession, and administered to him the rites of the church.

An illness he was seized with at Annecy made him defer his consecration. On his recovery he was obliged to go to Paris on affairs of his diocese, and was received there by all sorts of persons with all the regard due to his extraordinary merit. The king was then at Fontainebleau; but the saint was desired to preach the Lent to the court in the chapel of the Louvre. This he did in a manner that charmed every one, and wrought innumerable wonderful conversions. The duchesses of Mercœur and Longueville sent him thereupon a purse of gold: he admired the embroidery, but gave it back, with thanks to them for honouring his discourses with their presence and good example. He preached a sermon against the pretended reformation, to prove it destitute of a lawful mission: it being begun at Meaux by Peter Clark, a wool-carder; at Paris by Masson Rivière, a young man called to the ministry by a company of laymen; and elsewhere after the like manner. This sermon converted many Calvinists, amongst others the Countess of Perdrieuville, who was

one of the most obstinate learned ladies of the sect: she consulted her ministers, and repaired often to Francis's conferences, till she had openly renounced Calvinism with all her numerous family. The whole illustrious house of Raconis followed her example, and so many others even of the most inveterate of the sect that it made Cardinal Perron, a man famous for controversy, say, "I can confute the Calvinists; but, to persuade and convert them, you must carry them to the coadjutor of Geneva." Henry IV was charmed with his preaching, and consulted him several times in matters relating to the direction of his conscience. There was no project of piety going forward about which he was not advised with. He promoted the establishment of the Carmelite nuns in France, and the introduction of F. Berulle's congregation of the oratory. The king himself earnestly endeavoured to detain him in France, by promises of 20,000 livres pension, and the first vacant bishopric: but Francis said, God had called him against his will to the bishopric of Geneva, and he thought it his obligation to keep it till his death; that the small revenue he had sufficed for his maintenance, and more would only be an incumbrance. The king was astonished at his disinterestedness when he understood that the bishopric of Geneva, since the revolt of that city, did not yield the incumbent above four or five thousand livres, that is, not two hundred and fifty-nine pounds a-year.

Some envious courtiers endeavoured to give the king a suspicion of his being a spy. The saint heard this accusation just as he was going into the pulpit; yet he preached as usual without the least concern; and that prince was too well convinced of the calumny, by his sanctity and candour. After a nine months' stay in Paris, he set out with the king's letters, and heard on the road that Granier, Bishop of Geneva, was dead. He hastened to Sales Castle, and as soon as clear of the first visits, made a twenty days' retreat to prepare himself for his consecration. He made a general confession, and laid down a plan of life, which he ever punctually observed. This was, never to wear any silk or camlets, or any clothes but woollen, as before; to have no paintings in his house but of devotions, no magnificence in furniture; never to use coach or litter, but to make his visits on foot; his family to consist of two priests, one for his chaplain, the other to take care of his temporalities and servants; nothing but common meats to be served to his table; to be always present at all feasts of devotion kept in any church in town: his regulation with respect to alms was incredible for his revenues: to go to the poor and sick in person; to rise every day at four, make an hour's meditations, say lauds and prime, then morning prayers with his family; to read the scripture till seven, then say mass, which he did every day, afterwards to apply to affairs till dinner, which being over, he allowed an hour for conversation, the rest of the afternoon he allotted to business and prayer. After supper he

read a pious book to his family for an hour, then night prayers; after which he said matins. He fasted all Fridays and Saturdays, and our Lady's eves: he privately wore a hair shirt, and used the discipline, but avoided all ostentatious austerities. But his exact regularity and uniformity of life, with a continued practice of interior self-denials, was the best mortification. He redoubled his fasts, austerities, and prayers as the time of his consecration drew nearer. This was performed on the 3rd of December, 1602. He immediately applied himself to preaching and the other functions of his charge. He was exceeding cautious in conferring holy orders. He ordained but few, neither was it without the strictest scrutiny passed upon all their qualifications for the priesthood. He was very zealous, both by word and example, in promoting the instruction of the ignorant by explanations of the catechism on Sundays and holidays; and his example had a great influence over the parish-priests in this particular, as also over the laity, both young and old. He inculcated to all the making, every hour when the clock struck, the sign of the cross, with a fervent aspiration on the passion of Christ. He severely forbade the custom of Valentines, or giving boys, in writing, the names of girls to be admired and attended on by them; and, to abolish it, he changed it into giving billets with the names of certain saints for them to honour and imitate in a particular manner. He performed the visitation of his diocese as soon as possible, published a new ritual, set on foot ecclesiastical conferences, and regulated all things, choosing St Charles Borromeo for his model.

Above all things he hated law-suits, and strictly commanded all ecclesiastics to avoid them, and refer all disputes to arbitration. He said they were such occasions of sins against charity that, if any one during the course of a law-suit had escaped them, that alone would suffice for his canonization. Towards the close of the visitation of his diocese, he reformed several monasteries. That of Six appealed to the parliament of Chamberry; but our saint was supported there, and carried his point. Whilst Francis was at Six he heard that a valley, three leagues off, was in the utmost desolation, by the tops of two mountains that had fallen and buried several villages, with the inhabitants and cattle. He crawled over unpassable ways to comfort and relieve these poor people, who had neither clothes to cover nor cottages to shelter them, nor bread to stay their hunger; he mingled his tears with theirs, relieved them, and obtained from the duke a remission of their taxes. The city of Dijon having procured leave from the duke of Savoy, the saint preached the Lent there in 1604, with wonderful fruit; but refused the present offered him by the city on that occasion. Being solicited by Henry IV to accept of a considerable abbey, the saint refused it; alleging that he dreaded riches as much as others could desire them; and that the less he had of them the

less he would have to answer for. That king offered to name him to the dignity of cardinal at the next promotion; but the saint made answer that, though he did not despise the offered dignity, he was persuaded that great titles would not sit well upon him, and might raise fresh obstacles to his salvation. He was also thought of at Rome as a very fit person to be promoted to that dignity, but was himself the only one who every where opposed and crossed the design. Being desired on another occasion by the same king to accept of a pension, the saint begged his majesty to suffer it to remain in the hands of his comptroller till he should call for it; which handsome refusal much astonished that great prince, who could not forbear saying, "That the Bishop of Geneva, by the happy independence in which his virtue had placed him, was as far above him as he by his royal dignity was above his subjects." His steward often found it difficult to provide for his family by reason of his great alms, and used to threaten to leave him. The saint would answer: "You say right; I am an incorrigible creature, and what is worse, I look as if I should long continue so." Or at other times, pointing to the crucifix: "How can we deny any thing to a God who reduced himself to this condition for the love of us!"

Pope Paul V ordered our saint to be consulted about the school dispute between the Dominicans and Jesuits on the grace of God, or *de auxiliis*. His opinion appears from his book "On the Love of God": but he answered his holiness in favour of neutrality, which he ever observed in school opinions; complaining often in how many they occasioned the breach of charity, and spent too much of their precious time, which, by being otherwise employed, might be rendered more conducive to God's honour. In 1609 he went to Bellay and consecrated bishop John Peter Camus, one of the most illustrious prelates of the church of France, and linked to our saint by the strictest bands of holy friendship. He wrote the book entitled "The Spirit of St Francis of Sales," consisting of many of his ordinary sayings and actions, in which his spirit shines with great advantage.

His incomparable book, "The Introduction to a Devout Life," was originally letters to a lady in the world, which, at the pressing instances of many friends, he formed into a book, and finished, to show that devotion suited Christians in a secular life no less than in cloisters. Villars, the Archbishop of Vienna, wrote to him upon it: "Your book charms, inflames, and puts me in raptures, as often as I open any part of it." The author received the like applause and commendation from all parts, and it was immediately translated into all the languages of Europe. Henry IV of France was extremely pleased with it; his queen, Mary of Medicis, sent it richly bound and adorned with jewels to James I of England, who was wonderfully taken with it, and asked his bishops why none of them could write with such feeling and unction.<sup>1</sup> There was, however, one

<sup>1</sup> Aug. Sales in Vit.



religious order in which this book was much censured, as if it had allowed of gallantry and scurrilous jests, and approved of balls and comedies, which was very far from the saint's doctrine. A preacher of that order had the rashness and presumption to declaim bitterly against the book in a public sermon, to cut it in pieces, and burn it in the very pulpit. The saint bore this outrage without the least resentment, so perfectly was he dead to self-love. This appears more wonderful to those who know how jealous authors are of their works, as the offspring of their reason and judgment, of which men are of all things the fondest. His book of "The Love of God" cost him much more reading, study, and meditation. In it he paints his own soul. The general of the Carthusians had wrote to him upon his Introduction, advising him to write no more, because nothing else could equal that book. But seeing this, he bade him never cease writing, because his latter works always surpassed the former; and James I was so delighted with the book that he expressed a great desire to see the author. This being told the saint, he cried out, "Ahl who will give me the wings of a dove, and I will fly to the king, into that great island, formerly the country of saints, but now overwhelmed with the darkness of error. If the duke will permit me, I will arise, and go to that great Ninive; I will speak to the king, and will announce to him, with the hazard of my life, the word of the Lord." In effect, he solicited the Duke of Savoy's consent, but could never obtain it.<sup>1</sup> That jealous sovereign feared lest he should be drawn in to serve another state, or sell to some other his right to Geneva, on which account he often refused him leave to go to preach in France, when invited by many cities. His other works are sermons, which are not finished as they were preached, except perhaps that on the "Invention of the Cross." We have also his "Preparation for Mass"; his "Instructions for Confessors"; a collection of his "Maxims, Pious Breathings, and Sayings," wrote by the Bishop of Bellay; some "Fragments"; and his "Entertainments to his Nuns of the Visitation," in which he recommends to them the most perfect interior self-denial, a disengagement of affections from all things temporal, and obedience. The institution of that order may be read in the "Life of B. Frances Chantal." St Francis designing his new order to be such, that all, even the sickly and weak, might be admitted into it, he chose for it the rule of St Austin, as commanding few extraordinary bodily austerities, and would have it possess funds and settlements in common, to prevent being carried off from the interior life by anxious cares about necessities. But then he requires from each person so strict a practice of poverty as to allow no one the proprietary or even the long use of any thing, and orders them every year to change chambers, beds, crosses, beads, and books. He will have no manner of account to be made of birth, wit, or

<sup>1</sup> Aug. Sales in Vit.

talents, but only of humility; he obliges them only to the little office of our Lady, which all might easily learn to understand; meditations, spiritual reading, recollection, and retreats abundantly compensating the defect. All his regulations tend to instil a spirit of piety, charity, meekness, and simplicity. He subjects his order to the bishop of each place, without any general. Pope Paul V approved it, and erected the congregation of the Visitation into a religious order.

St Francis, finding his health decline, and his affairs to multiply, after having consulted Cardinal Frederic Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, chose for his coadjutor in the bishopric of Geneva his brother, John Francis of Sales, who was consecrated Bishop of Chalcedon at Turin in 1618. But the saint still applied himself to his functions as much as ever. He preached the Lent at Grenoble in 1617 and again in 1618, with his usual conquests of souls, converting many Calvinists, and among these the Duke of Lesdiguières. In 1619 he accompanied to Paris the Cardinal of Savoy, to demand the sister of King Louis XIII, Christina of France, in marriage for the Prince of Piedmont. He preached the Lent in St Andre des Arc, and had always such a numerous audience that cardinals, bishops, and princes could scarcely find room. His sermons and conferences, and still more the example of his holy life, and the engaging sweetness of his conversation, most powerfully moved not only the devout, but also heretics, libertines, and atheists, whilst his eloquence and learning convinced their understandings. The Bishop of Bellay tells us that he entreated the saint at Paris not to preach twice every day, morning and evening, for the sake of his health. St Francis answered him with a smile, "That it cost him much less to preach a sermon than to find an excuse for himself when invited to perform that function." He added, "God has appointed me a pastor and a preacher, and is not every one to follow his profession? But I am surprised that the people in this great city flock so eagerly to my sermons, for my tongue is slow and heavy, my conceptions low, and my discourses flat, as you yourself are witness." "Do you imagine," said the other, "that eloquence is what they seek in your discourses? It is enough for them to see you in the pulpit. Your heart speaks to them by your countenance, and by your eyes, were you only to say the Our Father with them. You are possessed of a kind of eloquence which is of heaven; the power of this is astonishing." St Francis, smiling, turned off the discourse.<sup>1</sup> The match being concluded, the Princess Christina chose Francis for her chief almoner, desiring to live always under his direction; but all her entreaties could neither prevail on him to leave his diocese, though he had a coadjutor, nor to accept of a pension, and it was only on these two conditions he undertook the charge, always urging that nothing could dispense

<sup>1</sup> Quel est le Meilleur Gouvernement, &c., ch. 8, p. 298.

with him from residence. The princess made him a present of a rich diamond by way of an investiture, desiring him to keep it for her sake. "I will," said he, "unless the poor stand in need of it." She answered, she would then redeem it. He said, "This will happen so often that I shall abuse your bounty." Finding it given to the poor afterwards at Turin, she gave him another richer, charging him to keep *that at least*. He said, "Madam, I cannot promise you; I am very unfit to keep things of value." Inquiring after it one day, she was told it was always in pawn for the poor, and that the diamond belonged not to the bishop, but to all the beggars of Geneva. He had indeed a heart which was not able to refuse any thing to those in want. He often gave to beggars the waistcoat off his own back, and sometimes the cruets of his chapel. The pious cardinal, Henry de Gondi, Bishop of Paris, used all manner of arguments to obtain his consent to be his coadjutor in the see of Paris, but he was resolved never to quit the church which God had first committed to his charge.

Upon his return to Annecy, he would not touch a farthing of his revenue for the eighteen months he was absent, but gave it to his cathedral, saying it could not be his, for he had not earned it. He applied himself to preaching, instructing, and hearing confessions with greater zeal than ever. In a plague which raged there, he daily exposed his own life to assist his flock. The saint often met with injurious treatment and very reviling words, which he ever repaid with such meekness and beneficence as never failed to gain his very enemies. A lewd wretch, exasperated against him for his zeal against a wicked harlot, forged a letter of intrigue in the holy prelate's name, which made him pass for a profligate and an hypocrite with the Duke of Nemours and many others: the calumny reflected also on the nuns of the Visitation. Two years after, the author of it lying on his death-bed, called in witnesses, publicly justified the saint, and made an open confession of the slander and forgery. The saint had ever an entire confidence in the divine providence, was ever full of joy, and resigned to all the appointments of heaven, to which he committed all events. He had a sovereign contempt of all earthly things, whether riches, honours, dangers, or sufferings. He considered only God and his honour in all things; his soul perpetually breathed nothing but his love and praises; nor could he contain this fire within his breast, for it discovered itself in his countenance, which, especially whilst he said mass, or distributed the blessed eucharist, appeared shining, as it were, with rays of glory, and breathing holy fervour.

In the year 1622, he received an order from the Duke of Savoy to go to Avignon to wait on Louis XIII, who had just finished the civil wars in Languedoc. Finding himself indisposed, he took his last leave of his friends, saying he should see them no more, which drew from them floods

of tears. At Avignon he was at his prayers during the king's triumphant entry, and never went to the window to see any part of that great pomp. He was obliged to attend the king and the Cardinal of Savoy to Lyons, where he refused all the grand apartments offered him by the intendant of the province and others to lodge in the poor chamber of the gardener to the Monastery of the Visitation, as he was never better pleased than when he could most imitate the poverty of his Saviour. He received from the king and queen-mother, and from all the princes, the greatest marks of honour and esteem, and, though indisposed, continued to preach and perform all his functions, especially of Christmas-day, and St John's in the morning. After dinner he began to fall gradually into an apoplexy, was put to bed by his servant, and received extreme unction; but as he had said mass that day, and his vomiting continued, it was thought proper not to give him the viaticum. He repeated with great fervour, "My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God; I will sing the mercies of the Lord to all eternity. When shall I appear before his face? Show me, my beloved, where thou feedest, where thou restest at noon-day. O my God, my desire is before thee, and my sighs are not hidden from thee. My God and my all! my desire is that of the hills eternal." Whilst the physicians applied blistering plaisters and hot irons behind his neck, and a caustic to the crown of his head, which burned him to the bone, he shed abundance of tears under excess of pain, repeating, "Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin. Still cleanse me more and more." "What do I here, my God, distant from thee—separated from thee?" And to those about him, "Weep not, my children; must not the will of God be done?" One suggesting to him the prayer of St Martin, "If I am still necessary for thy people, I refuse not to labour," he seemed troubled at being compared to so great a saint, and said he was an unprofitable servant, whom neither God nor his people needed. His apoplexy increasing, though slowly, he seemed at last to lose his senses, and happily expired on the feast of Holy Innocents, the 28th of December, at eight o'clock at night, in the year 1622, the fifty-sixth of his age and the twentieth of his episcopacy. His corpse was embalmed, and carried with the greatest pomp to Annecy, where he had directed by will it should be interred. It was laid in a magnificent tomb near the high altar in the church of the first monastery of the Visitation. After his beatification by Alexander VII, in 1661, it was placed upon the altar in a rich silver shrine. He was canonised in 1665 by the same pope, and his feast fixed to the 29th of January, on which day his body was conveyed to Annecy. His heart was kept in a leaden case, in the Church of the Visitation at Lyons; it was afterwards exposed in a silver one, and lastly in one of gold, given by King Louis XIII. Many miracles—as the raising to life of two persons who were drowned, the curing of the blind,

paralytic, and others—were authentically attested to have been wrought by his relics and intercession, not to mention those he had performed in his lifetime, especially during his missions. Pope Alexander VII, then Cardinal Chigi, and plenipotentiary in Germany, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, and others, attributed their cures in sickness to this saint's patronage.

Among his ordinary remarkable sayings, we read that he often repeated to Bishop Camus, "That truth must be always charitable; for bitter zeal does harm instead of good." By his patience and meekness under all injuries he overcame the most obstinate, and ever after treated them with singular affection, calling them dearer friends, because regained. A great prelate observes from his example that the meek are kings of other hearts, which they powerfully attract and can turn as they please, and in an express and excellent treatise proposes him as an accomplished model of all the qualifications requisite in a superior to govern well.

Meekness was the favourite virtue of St Francis de Sales. He once was heard to say that he had employed three years in studying it in the school of Jesus Christ, and that his heart was still far from being satisfied with the progress he had made. If he, who was meekness itself, imagined, nevertheless, that he had possessed so little of it; what shall we say of those who, upon every trifling occasion, betray the bitterness of their hearts in angry words and actions of impatience and outrage? Our saint was often tried in the practice of this virtue, especially when the hurry of business and the crowds that thronged on him for relief in their various necessities scarce allowed him a moment to breathe. He has left us his thoughts upon this situation, which his extreme affability rendered very frequent to him. "God," says he, "makes use of this occasion to try whether our hearts are sufficiently strengthened to bear every attack. I have myself been sometimes in this situation: but I have made a covenant with my heart and with my tongue, in order to confine them within the bounds of duty. I considered those persons who crowd in one upon the other as children who run into the embraces of their father: as the hen refuseth not protection to her little ones when they gather around her, but, on the contrary, extendeth her wings so as to cover them all; my heart, I thought, was in like manner expanded, in proportion as the numbers of these poor people increased. The most powerful remedy against sudden starts of impatience is a sweet and amiable silence; however little one speaks, self-love will have a share in it, and some word will escape that may sour the heart and disturb its peace for a considerable time. When nothing is said, and cheerfulness preserved, the storm subsides, anger and indiscretion are put to flight, and nothing remains but a joy, pure and lasting. The person who possesses Christian meekness is affectionate and tender towards every one; he is disposed to forgive and excuse the frailties of others; the goodness of his heart appears

in a sweet affability that influences his words and actions, and presents every object to his view in the most charitable and pleasing light; he never admits in his discourse any harsh expression, much less any term that is haughty or rude. An amiable serenity is always painted on his countenance, which remarkably distinguishes him from those violent characters who, with looks full of fury, know only how to refuse; or who, when they grant, do it with so bad a grace that they lose all the merit of the favour they bestow."

Some persons thinking him too indulgent towards sinners, expressed their thoughts one day with freedom to him on this head: he immediately replied: "If there was any thing more excellent than meekness, God would have certainly taught it us; and yet there is nothing to which he so earnestly exhorts us, as to be 'meek and humble of heart.' Why would you hinder me to obey the command of my Lord, and follow him in the exercise of that virtue which he so eminently practised and so highly esteems? Are we then better informed in these matters than God himself?" But his tenderness was particularly displayed in the reception of apostates and other abandoned sinners; when these prodigals returned to him, he said, with all the sensibility of a father: "Come, my dear children, come, let me embrace you; ah, let me hide you in the bottom of my heart! God and I will assist you: all I require of you is not to despair: I shall take on myself the labour of the rest." Looks full of compassion and love expressed the sincerity of his feelings: his affectionate and charitable care of them extended even to their bodily wants, and his purse was open to them as well as his heart: he justified this proceeding to some, who, disedified at his extreme indulgence, told him it served only to encourage the sinner, and harden him still more in his crimes, by observing, "Are they not a part of my flock? Has not our blessed Lord given them his blood, and shall I refuse them my tears? These wolves will be changed into lambs: a day will come when, cleansed from their sins, they will be more precious in the sight of God than we are: if Saul had been cast off, we would never have had a St Paul."

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 29:*

ST FRANCIS DE SALES, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor of the Church: ST GILDAS, "The Wise," Patron of Vannes; surnamed Badonicus, because, being the son of a British lord, he was born in the year in which the British gained a victory over the Saxons at Mount Badon, now Bannesdown, near Bath. He has been called the brightest genius in the school of St Iltut. To improve himself in the knowledge of God and of himself was the end of all his studies. He crossed to Ireland to learn from those taught by St Patrick; then to a small isle in Brittany. He wrote eight canons of discipline. ST SABINIANUS, martyr: ST SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, lived about 425. The death of his beloved wife turned his heart from the world. He was a friend and disciple of St Martin of Tours, whose death he foresaw in a dream; he built and furnished many churches, employing the revenue of his estates in giving alms; "a servant of the church and of the poor." ST SULPICIOUS (SEVERUS), Archbishop of Bourges (about 591): and ST VALERIUS, Bishop of Treves (or Trier) about the year 100.

JANUARY 30

## ST BATHILDES, QUEEN OF FRANCE

(A.D. 680)

[From her life, written by a contemporary author, and a second life, which is the same with the former, except certain additions of a later date, in Bollandus and Mabillon, sec. 4, Ben. p. 447; and Act. Sanct. Ben. t. ii. See also Dubois, Hist. Eccl. Paris, p. 198; and Chatelain, Notes on the Martyr. Jan. 30, p. 462. See *Historia St Bathildis et Fundationem ejus*, amongst the MS. lives of the saints in the Abbey of Jumieges, t. ii. Also her MS. life at Bec, &c.]

ST BATHILDES, or BALDECHILDE, in French Bauteur, was an Englishwoman, who was carried over very young into France, and there sold for a slave, at a very low price, to Erkenwald, otherwise called Erchinoald, and Archimbald, mayor of the palace under King Clovis II. When she grew up, he was so much taken with her prudence and virtue that he committed to her the care of his household. She was no ways puffed up, but seemed the more modest, more submissive to her fellow-slaves, and always ready to serve the meanest of them in the lowest offices. King Clovis II, in 649, took her for his royal consort, with the applause of his princes and whole kingdom, such was the renown of her extraordinary endowments. This unexpected elevation, which would have turned the strongest head of a person addicted to pride, produced no alteration in a heart perfectly grounded in humility and other virtues. She seemed even to become more humble than before, and more tender of the poor. Her present station furnished her with the means of being truly their mother, which she was before in the inclination and disposition of her heart. All other virtues appeared more conspicuous in her, but above the rest an ardent zeal for religion. The king gave her the sanction of his royal authority for the protection of the church, the care of the poor, and the furtherance of all religious undertakings. She bore him three sons, who all successively wore the crown—Clotaire III, Childeric II, and Thierry I. He dying in 655, when the eldest was only five years old, left her regent of the kingdom. She seconded the zeal of St Owen, St Eligius, and other holy bishops, and with great pains banished simony out of France, forbade Christians to be made slaves, did all in her power to promote piety, and filled France with hospitals and pious foundations. She restored the monasteries of St Martin, St Denys, St Medard, &c., founded the great Abbey of Corbie for a seminary of virtue and sacred learning, and the truly royal nunnery of Chelles, on the Marne, which had been begun by St Clotildis. As soon as her son Clotaire was of an age to govern, she with great joy shut herself up in this Monastery of Chelles in 665—a happiness which she had long earnestly desired, though it was with great difficulty that she obtained the consent of the princes. She had no sooner taken the veil but she seemed to have forgotten entirely her former dignity,

and was only to be distinguished from the rest by her extreme humility, serving them in the lowest offices, and obeying the holy abbess, St Bertilla, as the last among the sisters. She prolonged her devotions every day with many tears, and made it her greatest delight to visit and attend the sick, whom she comforted and served with wonderful charity. St Owen, in his "Life of St Eligius," mentions many instances of the great veneration which St Bathildes bore that holy prelate, and relates that St Eligius, after his death, in a vision by night, ordered a certain courtier to reprove the queen for wearing jewels and costly apparel in her widowhood, which she did not out of pride, but because she thought it due to her state whilst she was regent of the kingdom. Upon this admonition she laid them aside, distributed a great part to the poor, and with the richest of her jewels made a most beautiful and sumptuous cross, which she placed at the head of the tomb of St Eligius. She was afflicted with long and severe colics and other pains, which she suffered with an admirable resignation and joy. In her agony she recommended to her sisters, charity, care of the poor, fervour, and perseverance, and gave up her soul in devout prayer on the 30th of January, in 680, on which day she is honoured in France, but is named on the 26th in the Roman Martyrology.

A Christian who seriously considers that he is to live here but a moment, and will live eternally in the world to come, must confess that it is a part of wisdom to refer all his actions and views to prepare himself for that everlasting dwelling, which is his true country. Our only and necessary affair is to live for God, to do his will, and to sanctify and save our souls. If we are employed in a multiplicity of exterior business, we must imitate St Bathildes, when she bore the whole weight of the state. In all we do God and his holy will must be always before our eyes, and to please him must be our only aim and desire. Shunning the anxiety of Martha, and reducing all our desires to this one of doing what God requires of us, we must with her call in Mary to our assistance. In the midst of action, whilst our hands are at work, our mind and heart ought to be interiorly employed on God, at least virtually, that all our employments may be animated with the spirit of piety: and hours of repose must always be contrived to pass at the feet of Jesus, where in the silence of all creatures we may listen to his sweet voice, refresh in him our wearied souls, and renew our fervour.

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 30 :*

ST ADELELMUS, Abbot : ST ALDEGUND, virgin and Abbess, of the royal house of France, consecrated herself to God, serving Him in her parents' house until 638, when she took the veil. Later she became Abbess of a great house at Mauberge ; she was favoured with many revelations and often tried by persecution. She bore the agonizing malady which ended her life with patience and even joy, and expired "in a rapture of pure love" : ST BARSIMÆUS (Barsamja), third Bishop of Odessa, martyred under Trajan, 250 : ST BATHILDES : ST HYACINTHA MARISCOTTI, virgin : ST MARTINA, virgin and martyr : and BLESSED SEBASTIAN VALFRÉ, Confessor, 1710.



JANUARY 31

ST PETER NOLASCO, C., FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF  
OUR LADY FOR THE REDEMPTION OF CAPTIVES

(A.D. 1258)

[From *Chronica Sacri et Militaris Ordinis B. M. de Mercede*, per Bern. de Vargas, ej. Ord. 2 vols in folio, Panormi, 1622, and by John de Latomis, in 12mo., in 1621; and especially the Spanish history of the same, by Alonso Roman, 2 vols. folio, at Madrid, in 1618; and the life of the saint, compiled in Italian, by F. Francis Olibano, in quarto, 1668. See also Baillet, and *Hist. des Ordres Relig.* par Helyot, and *Hist. de l'Ordre de Notre Dame de la Merci*, par les RR. Pères de la Merci, de la Congrégation de Paris, folio, printed at Amiens in 1685.]

PETER, of the noble family of Nolasco, in Languedoc, was born in the diocese of St Papoul about the year 1189. His parents were very rich, but far more illustrious for their virtue. Peter, whilst an infant, cried at the sight of a poor man till something was given him to bestow on the object of his compassion. In his childhood he gave to the poor whatever he received for his own use. He was exceeding comely and beautiful, but innocence and virtue were his greatest ornaments. It was his pious custom to give a very large alms to the first poor man he met every morning without being asked. He rose at midnight, and assisted at matins in the church, as then the more devout part of the laity used to do together with all the clergy. At the age of fifteen he lost his father, who left him heir to a great estate, and he remained at home under the government of his pious mother, who brought him up in extraordinary sentiments and practices of virtue. Being solicited to marry, he betook himself to the serious consideration of the vanity of all earthly things, and, rising one night full of those thoughts, prostrated himself in fervent prayer, which he continued till morning, most ardently devoting himself to God in the state of celibacy, and dedicating his whole patrimony to the promoting of his divine honour. He followed Simon of Montfort, general of the holy war against the Albigenses, an heretical sect, which had filled Languedoc with great cruelties and overspread it with universal desolation. The count vanquished them, and in the battle of Murot defeated and killed Peter, King of Arragon, and took his son James prisoner, a child of six years old. The conqueror having the most tender regard and compassion for the prince his prisoner, appointed Peter Nolasco, then twenty-five years old, his tutor, and sent them both together into Spain. Peter in the midst of the court of the king at Barcelona, where the kings of Arragon resided, led the life of a recluse, practising the austerities of a cloister. He gave no part of his time to amusements, but spent all the moments which the instruction of his pupil left free in holy prayer, meditation, and pious reading. The Moors at that time were possessed of a considerable part of Spain, and great numbers of Christians groaned under their tyranny in a miserable slavery both there and in Africa. Compassion for

the poor had always been the distinguishing virtue of Peter. The sight of so many moving objects in captivity, and the consideration of the spiritual danger to which their faith and virtue stood exposed under their Mahometan masters, touched his heart to the quick, and he soon spent his whole estate in redeeming as many as he could. Whenever he saw any poor Christian slaves, he used to say, "Behold eternal treasures which never fail!" By his discourses he moved others to contribute large alms towards this charity, and at last formed a project for instituting a religious order for a constant supply of men and means whereby to carry on so charitable an undertaking. This design met with great obstacles in the execution: but the Blessed Virgin, the true mother of mercy, appearing to St Peter, the king, and St Raymund of Pennafort in distinct visions the same night, encouraged them to prosecute the holy scheme under the assurance of her patronage and protection. St Raymund was the spiritual director both of St Peter and of the king, and a zealous promoter of this charitable work. The king declared himself the protector of the order, and assigned them a large quarter of his own palace for their abode. All things being settled for laying the foundation of it on the feast of St Laurence, in the year 1223, the king and St Raymund conducted St Peter to the church, and presented him to Berengarius, the Bishop of Barcelona, who received his three solemn religious vows, to which the saint added a fourth, to devote his whole substance and his very liberty, if necessary, to the ransoming of slaves; the like vow he required of all his followers. St Raymund made an edifying discourse on the occasion, and declared from the pulpit, in the presence of this august assembly, that it had pleased Almighty God to reveal to the king, to Peter Nolasco, and to himself, his will for the institution of an order for the redemption of the faithful detained in bondage among the infidels. This was received by the people with the greatest acclamations of joy, happy presages of the future success of the holy institute. After this discourse, St Peter received the new habit (as Mariana and Pope Clement VIII in his bull say) from St Raymund, who established him first general of this new order, and drew up for it certain rules and constitutions. Two other gentlemen were professed at the same time with St Peter. When St Raymund went to Rome, he obtained from Pope Gregory IX, in the year 1225, the confirmation of this order, and of the rule and constitutions he had drawn up. He wrote an account of this from Rome to St Peter, informing him how well pleased his holiness was with the wisdom and piety of the institute. The religious chose a white habit, to put them continually in mind of innocence; they wear a scapular, which is likewise white; but the king would oblige them, for his sake, to bear the royal arms of Arragon, which are interwoven on their habit upon the breast. Their numbers increasing very fast, the saint petitioned the king for another house,

The saint, robed in the white habit of the Benedictines, is shown in the act of writing the Gospel.

## SAINT PETER NOLASCO



who, on this occasion, built for them, in 1232, a magnificent convent at Barcelona.

King James, having conquered the kingdom of Valencia, founded in it several rich convents; one was in the city of Valencia, which was taken by the aid of the prayers of St Peter, when the soldiers had despaired of success, tired out by the obstinacy of the besieged and strength of the place. In thanksgiving for this victory the king built the rich monastery in the royal Palace of Uneya, near the same city, on a spot where an image of our Lady was dug up, which is still preserved in the church of this convent, and is famous for pilgrimages. It is called the Monastery of our Lady of Mercy del Puche.<sup>1</sup> That prince attributed to the prayers of St Peter thirty great victories which he obtained over the infidels, and the entire conquest of the two kingdoms of Valencia and Murcia. St Peter, after his religious profession, renounced all his business at court, and no entreaties of the king could ever after prevail with him to appear there but once, and this was upon a motive of charity to reconcile two powerful noblemen who, by their dissension, had divided the whole kingdom and kindled a civil war. The saint ordained that two members of the order should be sent together amongst the infidels to treat about the ransom of Christian slaves, and they are hence called Ransomers. One of the two first employed in this pious work was our saint, and the kingdom of Valencia was the first place that was blessed with his labours; the second was that of Granada. He not only comforted and ransomed a great number of captives, but, by his charity and other rare virtues, was the happy instrument of inducing many of the Mahometans to embrace the faith of Christ. He made several other journeys to the coasts of Spain, besides a voyage to Algiers, where, among other sufferings, he underwent imprisonment for the faith. But the most terrifying dangers could never make him desist from his pious endeavours for the conversion of the infidels, burning with a holy desire of martyrdom. He begged earnestly of his order to be released from the burden of his generalship, but by his tears could only obtain the grant of a vicar to assist him in the discharge of it. He employed himself in the meanest offices of his convent, and coveted above all things to have the distribution of the daily alms at the gate of the monastery; he at the same time instructed the poor in the knowledge of God and in virtue. St Louis IX of France wrote frequently to him, and desired much to see him. The saint waited on him in Languedoc in the year 1243, and the king, who tenderly embraced him, requested him to accompany him in his expedition to recover the Holy Land. St Peter earnestly desired it, but was hindered by sickness, with which he was continually afflicted during the last years of his life, the effect of his fatigues and austerities, and he bore it with incomparable

<sup>1</sup> Podoniensis.

patience. In 1249 he resigned the offices of ransomer and general, which was six or seven years before his death. This happened on Christmas-day in 1256. In his agony he tenderly exhorted his religious to perseverance, and concluded with those words of the psalmist, "Our Lord hath sent redemption to his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever."<sup>1</sup> He then recommended his soul to God by that charity with which Christ came from heaven to redeem us from the captivity of the devil, and melting into tears of compunction and divine love, he expired, being in the sixty-seventh year of his age. His relics are honoured by many miracles. He was canonised by Pope Urban VIII. His festival was appointed by Clement VIII to be kept on the 31st of January.

Charity towards all mankind was a distinguishing feature in the character of the saints. This benevolent virtue so entirely possessed their hearts that they were constantly disposed to sacrifice even their lives to the relief and assistance of others. Zealously employed in removing their temporal necessities, they laboured with redoubled vigour to succour their spiritual wants, by rooting out from their souls the dominion of sin, and substituting in its room the kingdom of God's grace. This conduct of the saints, extraordinary as it is, ceases to appear surprising when we recollect the powerful arguments our Blessed Saviour makes use of to excite us to the love of our neighbour. But how shall we justify our unfeeling hard-heartedness, that seeks every trifling pretence to exempt us from the duty of succouring the unfortunate? Have we forgot that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who alone hath bestowed on us whatever we possess, hath made charity towards our fellow-creature, but especially towards the needy, an indispensable precept? Do we not know that he bids us consider the suffering poor as members of the same head, heirs of the same promises, as our brethren and his children who represent him on earth?

*The following feasts are celebrated on January 31 :*

ST AIDANUS, Bishop of Ferns: SAINTS CYRUS and JOHN, the former a physician who converted many to the faith, the latter an Arabian. Hearing that a lady called Athanasia and her three daughters were suffering torments for the name of Christ, at Canopus, they went there to encourage them. They were taken, beaten, and tortured. At length the four holy women and, four days later, Saints Cyrus and John, were beheaded. Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Latins all venerate these two saints. ST EUSEBIUS, hermit and martyr: BLESSED FRANCIS ZAVIER BIANCHI: ST GERMINIANUS, Bishop of Modena, 348: BLESSED LODOVICA ALBERTONI, widow: ST MARCELLA, widow, styled by St Jerome the glory of Roman ladies; he wrote sixteen letters to her. Many noble virgins put themselves under her direction. She was scourged by the Goths to make her reveal where her supposed treasure was, but she had given it all to the poor long before: BLESSED PAOLO GAMBARA-COSTA, matron, the example of married life: ST PETER NOLASCO: and ST ULPHIA, virgin.

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxi. 9.

FEBRUARY I

## ST IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, MARTYR

(A.D. 107)

[From his genuine epistles; also from the acts of his martyrdom, St Chrys. Hom. in St Ignat. M. t. ii. p. 592, ed. Nov. Eusebius. See Tillemont, t. ii. p. 191; Cave, t. i. p. 100; Dom Ceillier, Dom Marechal, Concordance des Pères Grecs et Latins, t. i. p. 58.]

ST IGNATIUS, surnamed Theophorus, a word implying a divine or heavenly person, was a zealous convert and an intimate disciple of St John the Evangelist, as his acts assure us; also the apostles SS. Peter and Paul, who united their labours in planting the faith at Antioch. It was by their direction that he succeeded Evodius in the government of that important see, as we are told by St Chrysostom,<sup>1</sup> who represents him as a perfect model of virtue in that station, in which he continued upwards of forty years. During the persecution of Domitian, St Ignatius defended his flock by prayer, fasting, and daily preaching the word of God. He rejoiced to see peace restored to the church on the death of that emperor, so far as this calm might be beneficial to those committed to his charge, but was apprehensive that he had not attained to the perfect love of Christ, nor the dignity of a true disciple, because he had not as yet been called to seal the truth of his religion with his blood, an honour he somewhat impatiently longed for. The peaceable reign of Nerva lasted only fifteen months. The governors of several provinces renewed the persecution under Trajan, his successor; and it appears from Trajan's letter to Pliny the younger, governor of Bithynia, that the Christians were ordered to be put to death if accused, but it was forbid to make any inquiry after them. That emperor sullied his clemency and bounty and his other pagan virtues by incest with his sister, by an excessive vanity, which procured him the surname of Parietmus (or dauber of every wall with the inscriptions of his name and actions), and by blind superstition, which rendered him a persecutor of the true followers of virtue, out of a notion of gratitude to his imaginary deities, especially after his victories over the Daci and Scythians in 101 and 105. In the year 106, which was the ninth of his reign, he set out for the East on an expedition against the Parthians, and made his entry into Antioch on the 7th of January, 107, with the pomp of a triumph. His first concern was about the affair of religion and worship of the gods, and for this reason he resolved to compel the Christians

<sup>1</sup> Hom. in St Ignat. t. ii. p. 592. See also Theodoret, Dial. 1, p. 33.

either to acknowledge their divinity and sacrifice to them, or suffer death in case of refusal.

Ignatius, as a courageous soldier, being concerned only for his flock, willingly suffered himself to be taken and carried before Trajan, who thus accosted him: "Who art thou, wicked demon, that durst transgress my commands, and persuade others to perish?" The saint answered, "No one calls Theophorus a wicked demon." Trajan said, "Who is Theophorus?" Ignatius answered, "He who carrieth Christ in his breast." Trajan replied, "And do not we seem to thee to bear the gods in our breasts, whom we have assisting us against our enemies?" Ignatius said, "You err in calling those gods who are no better than devils, for there is only one God, who made heaven and earth and all things that are in them, and one Jesus Christ, his only Son, into whose kingdom I earnestly desire to be admitted." Trajan said, "Do not you mean him that was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" Ignatius answered, "The very same, who by his death has crucified with sin its author, who overcame the malice of the devils, and had enabled those who bear him in their heart to trample on them." Trajan said, "Dost thou carry about Christ within thee?" Ignatius replied, "Yes; for it is written, I will dwell and walk in them."<sup>1</sup> Then Trajan dictated the following sentence: "It is our will that Ignatius, who saith that he carrieth the crucified man within himself, be bound and conducted to Rome, to be devoured there by wild beasts, for the entertainment of the people." The holy martyr, hearing this sentence, cried out with joy, "I thank thee, O Lord, for vouchsafing to honour me with this token of perfect love for thee, and to be bound with chains of iron in imitation of thy apostle Paul, for thy sake." Having said this, and prayed for the church, and recommended it with tears to God, he joyfully put on the chains, and was hurried away by a savage troop of soldiers to be conveyed to Rome. His inflamed desire of laying down his life for Christ made him embrace his sufferings with great joy.

On his arrival at Seleucia, a sea-port, about sixteen miles from Antioch, he was put on board a ship which was to coast the southern and western parts of Asia Minor. Why this route was pitched upon, consisting of so many windings, preferably to a more direct passage from Seleucia to Rome, is not known; probably to render the terror of his punishment the more extensive and of the greater force, to deter men from embracing and persevering in the faith: but providence seems to have ordained it for the comfort and edification of many churches. Several Christians of Antioch, taking a shorter way, got to Rome before him, where they waited his arrival. He was accompanied thither from Syria by Reus, Philo a deacon, and Agathopodus, who seems to have written these acts of his martyrdom. He was guarded night and day, both by sea and land,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 16.

by ten soldiers, whom he calls ten leopards, on account of their inhumanity and merciless usage: who, the kinder he was to them, were the more fierce and cruel to him. This voyage, however, gave him the opportunity of confirming in faith and piety the several churches he saw on his route; giving them the strictest caution against heresies and schism, and recommending to them an inviolable attachment to the tradition of the apostles. St Chrysostom adds that he taught them admirably to despise the present life, to love only the good things to come, and never to fear any temporal evils whatever. The faithful flocked from the several churches he came near, to see him, and to render him all the service in their power.

So great was his fervour and desire of suffering, that by the fatigues and length of voyage, which was a very bad one, he appeared the stronger and more courageous. On their reaching Smyrna, he was suffered to go ashore, which he did with great joy, to salute St Polycarp, who had been his fellow-disciple under St John the Evangelist. The conversation was upon topics suitable to their character, and St Polycarp felicitated him on his chains and sufferings in so good a cause. At Smyrna he was met by deputies of several churches, who were sent to salute him. Those from Ephesus were Onesimus the bishop, Burrhus the deacon, Crocus, Euplus, and Fronto. From Magnesia in Lydia, Damas the bishop, Bassus and Apollo, priests, and Sotio, deacon. From Tralles, also in Lydia, Polybius the bishop. From Smyrna St Ignatius wrote four letters: in that to the church of Ephesus, he commends the Bishop Onesimus and the piety and concord of the people, and their zeal against all heresies, and exhorts them to glorify God all manner of ways; to be subject, in unanimity, to their bishops and priests; to assemble as often as possible with them in public prayer, by which the power of Satan is weakened; to oppose only meekness to anger, humility to boasting, prayers to curses and reproaches, and to suffer all injuries without murmuring. He says, that because they are spiritual, and perform all they do in a spiritual manner, that all, even their ordinary actions, are spiritualized, because they do all in Jesus Christ. That he ought to have been admonished by them, but his charity would not suffer him to be silent: wherefore he prevents them, by admonishing first, that both might meet in the will of God. He bids them not to be solicitous to speak, but to live well, and to edify others by their actions; and recommends himself and his widow-church of Antioch to their prayers. Himself he calls their outcast, yet declares that he is ready to be immolated for their sake; and says they were persons who had found mercy, but he a condemned man; they were strengthened in grace, but he struggling in the midst of dangers. He calls them fellow-travellers in the road to God, which is charity; and says they bore God and Christ in their breasts, and were his temples, embellished with all virtues, and that he exulted exceedingly for the honour of being made worthy to write to them, and



rejoice in God with them: for setting a true value on the life to come, they loved nothing but God alone. Speaking of heretics, he says that he who corrupts the faith for which Christ died will go into unquenchable fire, and also he who heareth him. It is observed by him that God concealed from the devil three mysteries: the virginity of Mary, her bringing forth, and the death of the Lord; and he calls the Eucharist the medicine of immortality, the antidote against death, by which we always live in Christ. "Remember me, as I pray that Jesus Christ be mindful of you. Pray for the church of Syria, from whence I am carried in chains to Rome, being the last of the faithful who are there. Farewell in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ our common hope." The like instructions he repeats with a new and most moving turn of thought in his letters to the churches of Magnesia, and of the Trallians, inculcates the greatest abhorrence of schism and heresy, and begs their prayers for himself and his church in Syria, of which he is not worthy to be called a member, being the last of them. His fourth letter was written to the Christians of Rome. The saint knew the all-powerful efficacy of the prayers of the saints, and feared lest they should obtain of God his deliverance from death. He therefore besought St Polycarp and others at Smyrna to join their prayers with his that the cruelty of the wild beasts might quickly rid the world of him, that he might be presented before Jesus Christ. With this view he wrote to the faithful at Rome, to beg that they would not endeavour to obtain of God that the beasts might spare him as they had several other martyrs; which might induce the people to release him, and so disappoint him of his crown.

The ardour of divine love which the saint breathes throughout this letter is as inflamed as the subject is extraordinary. In it he writes: "I fear your charity lest it prejudice me. For it is easy for you to do what you please; but it will be difficult for me to attain unto God if you spare me. I shall never have such an opportunity of enjoying God: nor can you, if ye shall now be silent, ever be entitled to the honour of a better work. For if ye be silent in my behalf, I shall be made partaker of God; but if ye love my body, I shall have my course to run again. Therefore, a greater kindness you cannot do me than to suffer me to be sacrificed unto God whilst the altar is now ready; that so becoming a choir in love, in your hymns ye may give thanks to the Father by Jesus Christ, that God has vouchsafed to bring me, the Bishop of Syria, from the East unto the West, to pass out of the world unto God, that I may rise again unto him. I earnestly wish for the wild beasts that are prepared for me, which I heartily desire may soon dispatch me; whom I will entice to devour me entirely and suddenly, and not serve me as they have done some whom they have been afraid to touch; but if they are unwilling to meddle with me, I will even compel them to it. Pardon me this matter; I know what is

good for me. Now I begin to be a disciple: so that I have no desire after any thing visible or invisible, that I may attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire, or the cross, or the concourse of wild beasts, let cutting or tearing of the flesh, let breaking of bones and cutting off limbs, let the shattering in pieces of my whole body, and all the wicked torments of the devil come upon me, so I may but attain to Jesus Christ. All the compass of the earth, and the kingdoms of this world will profit me nothing. It is better for me to die for the sake of Jesus Christ than to rule unto the ends of the earth. Him I seek who died for us: Him I desire who rose again for us. Pray for me that I may possess God. If I shall suffer, ye have loved me: if I shall be rejected, ye have hated me. Remember in your prayers the church of Syria, which now enjoys God for its shepherd instead of me. I am ashamed to be called of their number, for I am not worthy, being the last of them, and an abortive: but through mercy I have obtained that I shall be something, if I enjoy God." The martyr gloried in his sufferings as in the highest honour, and regarded his chains as most precious jewels. His soul was raised above either the love or the fear of any thing on earth, and, as St Chrysostom says, he could lay down his life with as much ease and willingness as another man could put off his clothes. He even wished every step of his journey to meet with the wild beasts; and though that death was most shocking and barbarous, and presented the most frightful ideas, sufficient to startle the firmest resolution, yet it was incapable of making the least impression upon his courageous soul.

The guards pressed the saint to leave Smyrna, that they might arrive at Rome before the shows were over. He rejoiced exceedingly at their hurry, desiring impatiently to enjoy God by martyrdom. They sailed to Troas, where he was informed that God had restored peace to his church at Antioch, which freed him from the anxiety he had been under, fearing lest there should be some weak ones in his flock. At Troas he wrote three other letters—one to the church of Philadelphia, and a second to the Smyrnæans, in which he calls the heretics who denied Christ to have assumed true flesh, and the Eucharist to be his flesh, wild beasts in human shape, and forbids all communication with them, only allowing them to be prayed for, that they may be brought to repentance, which is very difficult. His last letter is addressed to St Polycarp, whom he exhorts to labour for Christ without sparing himself, for the measure of his labour will be that of his reward. The style of the martyr every where follows the impulses of a burning charity rather than the rules of grammar, and his pen is never able to express the sublimity of his thoughts. In every word there is a fire and a beauty not to be paralleled; every thing is full of a deep sense. He every where breathes the most profound humility and contempt of himself as an abortive, and the last of men; a great zeal

for the church, and abhorrence of schisms; the most ardent love of God and his neighbour, and tenderness for his own flock; begging the prayers of all the churches in its behalf to whom he wrote, and entreating of several that they would send an embassy to his church at Antioch to comfort and exhort them. The seven epistles of this apostolic father—the same which were quoted by St Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, St Athanasius, St Chrysostom, Theodoret, Gildas, &c.—are published genuine by Usher, Vossius, Cotelier, &c., and in English by Archbishop Wake, in 1710.

St Ignatius, not being allowed time to write to the other churches of Asia, commissioned St Polycarp to do it for him. From Troas they sailed to Neapolis, in Macedonia, and went thence to Philippi, from which place they crossed Macedonia and Epirus on foot, but took shipping again at Epidamnum, in Dalmatia, and sailing by Rhégium and Puteoli, were carried by a strong gale into the Roman port, the great station of the navy near Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, sixteen miles from Rome. He would gladly have landed at Puteoli, to have traced St Paul's steps, by going on foot from that place to Rome, but the wind rendered it impracticable. On landing, the authors of these acts, who were his companions, say they were seized with grief, seeing they were soon to be separated from their dear master, but he rejoiced to find himself so near the end of his race. The soldiers hastened him on, because the public shows were drawing to an end. The faithful of Rome came out to meet him, rejoicing at the sight of him, but grieving that they were so soon to lose him by a barbarous death. They earnestly wished that he might be released at the request of the people. The martyr knew in spirit their thoughts, and said much more to them than he had done in his letter on the subject of true charity, conjuring them not to obstruct his going to the Lord. Then kneeling with all the brethren, he prayed to the Son of God for the church, for the ceasing of the persecution, and for perpetual charity and unanimity among the faithful. He arrived at Rome on the 20th of December, the last day of the public entertainments, and was presented to the prefect of the city, to whom the emperor's letter was delivered at the same time. He was then hurried by the soldiers into the amphitheatre. The saint, hearing the lions roar, cried out, "I am the wheat of the Lord; I must be ground by the teeth of these beasts to be made the pure bread of Christ." Two fierce lions being let out upon him, they instantly devoured him, leaving nothing of his body but the larger bones; thus his prayer was heard. "After having been present at this sorrowful spectacle," say our authors, "which made us shed many tears, we spent the following night in our house in watching and prayer, begging of God to afford us some comfort by certifying us of his glory." They relate that their prayer was heard, and that several of them in their slumber

saw him in great bliss. They are exact in setting down the day of his death, that they might assemble yearly thereon to honour his martyrdom. They add that his bones were taken up and carried to Antioch, and there laid in a chest as an inestimable treasure. St Chrysostom says his relics were carried in triumph on the shoulders of all the cities from Rome to Antioch. They were first laid in the cemetery without the Daphnetic gate, but in the reign of Theodosius the younger were translated thence with great pomp to a church in the city, which had been a temple of Fortune, but from this time bore his name, as Evagrius relates.<sup>1</sup> St Chrysostom exhorts all people to visit them, assuring them they would receive thereby many advantages, spiritual and corporeal, which he proves at length.<sup>2</sup> They are now at Rome, in the Church of St Clement, pope, whither they were brought about the time when Antioch fell into the hands of the Saracens, in the reign of Heraclius, in 637.<sup>3</sup> The regular canons at Arouaise, near Bapaume, in Artois, the Benedictine monks at Liesse, in Hainault, and some other churches, have obtained each some bone of this glorious martyr.<sup>4</sup> The Greeks keep his feast a holyday on the day of his death, the 20th of December. His martyrdom happened in 107.

The perfect spirit of humility, meekness, patience, charity, and all other Christian virtues, which the seven epistles of St Ignatius breathe in every part, cannot fail deeply to affect all who attentively read them. Critics confess that they find in them a sublimity, an energy and beauty of thought and expression, which they cannot sufficiently admire. But the Christian is far more astonished at the saint's perfect disengagement of heart from the world, the ardour of his love for God, and the earnestness of his desire of martyrdom. Every period in them is full of profound sense, which must be attentively meditated on before we can discover the divine sentiments of all virtues which are here expressed. Nor can we consider them without being inspired by some degree of the same, and being covered with confusion to find ourselves fall so far short of the humility and fervour of the primitive saints. Let us listen to the instructions which this true disciple of Christ gives in his letter to the Philadelphians, an abstract of his other six epistles being given above. He begins it by a strenuous recommendation of union with their bishop, priests, and deacons, and gives to their bishop (whom he does not name) great praises, especially for his humility and meekness, insomuch that he says his silence was more powerful than the vain discourses of others, and that conversing with an unchangeable serenity of mind, and in the sweetness of the living God, he was utterly a stranger to anger. He charges them to refrain from the pernicious weeds of heresy and schism, which are not planted

<sup>1</sup> Evagr. Hist. Eccl. lib. i. c. 16, ed. Vales.

<sup>2</sup> Or. in St Ignat. t. ii. p. 600, ed. Nov

<sup>3</sup> See Baron Annal. ad an. 637, and Not ad Martyr. Rom. ad Dec. 17.

<sup>4</sup> See Henschenius, Feb. t. i. p. 35.

by the Father, nor kept by Christ. "Whoever belong to God and Jesus Christ, these are with the bishop. If any one follows him who maketh a schism, he obtains not the inheritance of the kingdom of God. He who walks in the simplicity of obedience is not enslaved to his passion. Use one Eucharist; for the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ is one, and the cup is one in the unity of his blood. There is one altar, as there is one bishop; with the college of the priesthood and the deacons, my fellow-servants, that you may do all things according to God. My brethren, my heart is exceedingly dilated in the tender love which I bear you, and exulting beyond bounds, I render you secure and cautious—not I, indeed, but Jesus Christ, in whom being bound I fear the more for myself, being yet imperfect. But your prayer with God will make me perfect, that I may obtain the portion which his mercy assigns me." Having cautioned them against adopting Jewish ceremonies, and against divisions and schisms, he mentions one that had lately happened among them, and speaks of a revelation which he had received of it as follows: "When I was amongst you I cried out with a loud voice, with the voice of God, saying, Harken to your bishop, and the priesthood, and the deacons. Some suspected that I said this from a foresight of the division which some afterwards made. But He for whom I am in chains is my witness that I knew it not from man, but the Spirit declared it, saying, Do ye nothing without your bishop. Keep your body holy as the temple of God. Be lovers of unity; shun all divisions. Be ye imitators of Jesus Christ, as he is of the Father. I therefore did what lay in me, as one framed to maintain union. Where disagreement or anger is found, there God never dwells. But God forgives all penitents." He charges them to send some person of honour from their church to congratulate with his church in Syria upon peace being restored to it, and calls him blessed who should be honoured with this commission.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 1 :*

ST BRIDGET, virgin and Abbess, secondary patroness of all Ireland and greatly revered there. She established many nunneries early in the sixth century and was ever true to her name, which means "a bright light": ST IGNATIUS; BLESSED HENRY MORSE, S.J., English martyr, 1595-1645: ST KINNEA of Ireland, baptised by St Patrick and received the veil from him: ST PRONIUS, martyr, a priest of Smyrna and a disciple of St Polycarp, arrested while celebrating the anniversary of that saint's martyrdom: and ST SIGEBERT, the French king of Austrasia, whose life of only twenty-five years was filled with good works.

## FEBRUARY 2

### THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, COMMONLY CALLED CANDLEMAS

THE law of God, given by Moses to the Jews, to insinuate both to us and them that by the sin of Adam man is conceived and born in sin, and obnoxious to his wrath, ordained that a woman, after child-birth, should

continue for a certain time in a state which that law calls unclean; during which she was not to appear in public, nor presume to touch any thing consecrated to God.<sup>1</sup> This term was of forty days upon the birth of a son, and the time was double for a daughter: on the expiration of which the mother was to bring to the door of the tabernacle, or temple, a lamb of a year old, and a young pigeon or turtle-dove. The lamb was for a holocaust, or burnt-offering, in acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, and in thanksgiving for her own happy delivery; the pigeon or turtle-dove was for a sin-offering. These being sacrificed to Almighty God by the priest, the woman was cleansed of the legal impurity and reinstated in her former privileges.

A young pigeon, or turtle-dove, by way of a sin-offering, was required of all, whether rich or poor: but whereas the charge of a lamb might be too burdensome on persons of narrow circumstances, in that case nothing more was required than two pigeons or two turtle-doves, one for a burnt, the other for a sin-offering.<sup>2</sup>

Our Saviour having been conceived by the Holy Ghost, and his blessed Mother remaining always a spotless virgin, it is most evident from the terms of the law<sup>3</sup> that she was, in reality, under no obligation to it, nor within the intent of it. She was, however, within the letter of the law in the eye of the world, who were as yet strangers to her miraculous conception. And her humility making her perfectly resigned, and even desirous to conceal her privilege and dignity, she submitted with great punctuality and exactness to every humbling circumstance which the law required. Pride indeed proclaims its own advantages, and seeks honours not its due; but the humble find their delight in obscurity and abasement, they shun all distinction and esteem, which they clearly see their own nothingness and baseness to be most unworthy of: they give all glory to God alone, to whom it is due. Devotion also and zeal to honour God by every observance prescribed by his law prompted Mary to perform this act of religion, though evidently exempt from the precept. Being poor herself, she made the offering appointed for the poor—accordingly is this part of the law mentioned by St Luke<sup>4</sup> as best agreeing with the meanness of her worldly condition. But her offering, however mean in itself, was made with a perfect heart, which is what God chiefly regards in all that is offered to him. The King of Glory would appear everywhere in the robes of poverty, to point out to us the advantages of a suffering and lowly state, and to repress our pride, by which, though really poor and mean in the eyes of God, we covet to appear rich, and, though sinners, would be deemed innocents and saints.

A second great mystery is honoured this day, regarding more immediately the person of our Redeemer—viz., his presentation in the

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xii. 2.<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 8.<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 2.<sup>4</sup> Luke ii. 24.

temple. Besides the law which obliged the mother to purify herself, there was another which ordered that the firstborn son should be offered to God;<sup>1</sup> and in these two laws were included several others—as that the child, after its presentation, should be ransomed<sup>2</sup> with a certain sum of money,<sup>3</sup> and peculiar sacrifices offered on the occasion.

Mary complies exactly with all these ordinances. She obeys not only in the essential points of the law, as in presenting herself to be purified, and in her offering her firstborn, but has strict regard to all the circumstances. She remains forty days at home, she denies herself all this time the liberty of entering the temple, she partakes not of things sacred, though the living temple of the God of Israel, and on the day of her purification she walks several miles to Jerusalem, with the world's Redeemer in her arms. She waits for the priest at the gate of the temple, makes her offerings of thanksgiving and expiation, presents her divine Son, by the hands of the priest, to his eternal Father, with the most profound humility, adoration, and thanksgiving. She then redeems him with five shekels, as the law appoints, and receives him back again as a depositum in her special care, till the Father shall again demand him for the full accomplishment of man's redemption. It is clear that Christ was not comprehended in the law; "the king's son, to whom the inheritance of the crown belongs, is exempt from servitude, much more Christ, who was the Redeemer both of our souls and bodies, was not subject to any law by which he was to be himself redeemed," as St Hilary observes.<sup>4</sup> But he would set an example of humility, obedience, and devotion, and would renew, in a solemn and public manner; and in the temple, the oblation of himself to his Father for the accomplishment of his will, and the redemption of man, which he had made privately in the first moment of his Incarnation. With what sentiments did the divine Infant offer himself to his Father at the same time! the greatest homage of his honour and glory the Father could receive, and a sacrifice of satisfaction adequate to the injuries done to the Godhead by our sins, and sufficient to ransom our souls from everlasting death! With what cheerfulness and charity did he offer himself to all his torments! to be whipped, crowned with thorns, and ignominiously put to death for us!

The ceremony of this day was closed by a third mystery—the meeting in the temple of the holy persons, Simeon and Anna, with Jesus and his parents, from which this festival was anciently called by the Greeks Hypante, the meeting. Holy Simeon, on that occasion, received into his arms the object of all his desires and sighs, and praised God in raptures

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xiii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> This, from Levit. xxvii. 6, and Numb. iii. 47, appears to have been five shekels, each shekel weighing, according to Prideaux (Preface to Connection of the Old and New Testament, p. xvii.), about three shillings of our money, so that the five amounted to about fifteen shillings sterling.

<sup>4</sup> St Hilary. in Matt. c. 17, n. 11, pp. 696, 697.

of devotion for being blessed with the happiness of beholding the so much longed-for Messiah. He foretold to Mary her martyrdom of sorrow, and that Jesus brought redemption to those who would accept of it on the terms it was offered them, but a heavy judgment on all infidels who should obstinately reject it, and on Christians also whose lives were a contradiction to his holy maxims and example. Mary, hearing this terrible prediction, did not answer one word, felt no agitation of mind from the present, no dread for the future, but courageously and sweetly committed all to God's holy will. Anna also, the prophetess, who, in her widowhood, served God with great fervour, had the happiness to acknowledge and adore in this great mystery the world's Redeemer. Amidst the crowd of priests and people the Saviour of the world is known only by Simeon and Anna. Even when he disputed with the doctors, and when he wrought the most stupendous miracles, the learned, the wise, and the princes did not know him. Yet here, whilst a weak, speechless child, carried in the arms of his poor mother, he is acknowledged and adored by Simeon and Anna. He could not hide himself from those who sought him with fervour, humility, simplicity, and ardent love. Unless we seek him in these dispositions he will not manifest himself nor communicate his graces to us. Simeon, having beheld his Saviour in the flesh, desired no longer to see the light of this world nor any creatures on earth. If we truly love God, our distance from him must be a continual pain, and we must sigh after that desired moment which will free us from the danger of ever losing him by sin, and will put us in possession of Him who is the joy of the blessed and the infinite treasure of heaven. Let us never cease to pray that he purify our hearts from all earthly dross, and draw them to himself; that he heal, satiate, and inflame our souls, as he only came upon earth to kindle in all hearts the fire of his love.

*On blessing the candles and the procession*

The procession with lighted tapers on this day is mentioned by Pope Gelasius I, also by St Ildefonsus, St Eligius,<sup>1</sup> St Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, St Cyril of Alexandria, &c., in their sermons on this festival. St Bernard says <sup>2</sup> "this holy procession was first made by the virgin mother, St Joseph, holy Simeon, and Anna, to be afterward performed in all places and by every nation, with the exultation of the whole earth, to honour this mystery." In his second sermon on this feast he describes it thus: <sup>3</sup> "They walk two and two, holding in their hands candles lighted, not from common fire, but from that which had first been blessed in the church by the priests,<sup>4</sup> and singing in the ways of the Lord, because

<sup>1</sup> Serm. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Serm. de Purif. p. 959.

<sup>3</sup> Serm. 2, p. 961.

<sup>4</sup> According to the ceremonies then in use.



great is his glory." He shows that the concurrence of many in the procession and prayer is a symbol of our union and charity, and renders our praises the more honourable and acceptable to God. We "walk" while we sing to God, to denote that to stand still in the paths of virtue is to go back. The lights we bear in our hands represent the divine fire of love with which our hearts ought to be inflamed, and which we are to offer to God without any mixture of strange fire, the fire of concupiscence, envy, ambition, or the love of creatures. We also hold these lights in our hands to honour Christ, and to acknowledge him as the "true light,"<sup>1</sup> whom they represent under this character, and who is called by holy Simeon in this mystery "a light for the enlightening of the Gentiles,"<sup>2</sup> for he came to dispel our spiritual darkness. The candles likewise express that by faith his light shines in our souls, as also that we are to "prepare his way" by good works, by which we are to be "a light to" men.<sup>3</sup>

Lights are used by the church during the celebration of the divine mysteries, while the gospel is read, and the sacraments administered, on a motive of honour and respect. "Throughout all the churches of the East," says St Jerom, "when the gospel is to be read, though the sun shines, torches are used, not to chase away darkness, but for a sign of joy."<sup>4</sup> Though piety consists in the fervour of the soul, and is interior and spiritual, yet many sensible things concur to its aid and improvement, and we may as well condemn the use of words, which are corporeal, and affect the soul by the sense of hearing, as the use of suitable approved ceremonies. Christ made use of sensible signs in the institution of his most divine sacraments, and in several miraculous cures, &c. The church always used external rites and ceremonies in the divine worship. These contribute to the majesty and dignity of religion, which in our present condition would appear naked if destitute of all exterior. The candles are blessed previously to the use of them, because the church blesses and sanctifies by prayer whatever is employed in the divine service. We are to hold the candles in our hands on this day while the gospel is read or sung, also from the elevation to the communion in the most fervent spirit of sacrifice, offering ourselves to God with our divine Redeemer, and desiring to meet in spirit this blessed company in this mystery, likewise to honour the mother of God in her purification, and still more so, with the most profound adoration and gratitude, our divine Saviour in his presentation in our flesh for us. The same lively sentiments of devotion ought to inflame our breasts on this occasion as if we had been present with holy Simeon and the rest in the temple whilst we carry in our hands these emblems of our spiritual joy and homage, and of the consecration

<sup>1</sup> John i. 9.<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 3.<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 6.<sup>4</sup> Adv. Vigil. p. 304.

of ourselves in union with our heavenly victim, through the intercession of his virgin mother.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 2 :*

THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, or Candlemas Day : ST LAURENCE, who came to England with St Augustine about the year 597, succeeding him in the archbishopric of Canterbury, which see he occupied for eleven years : he died in 619.

## FEBRUARY 3

### ST BLASE, BISHOP AND MARTYR

(A.D. 316)

[The four modern different Greek acts of this saint are of small authority. Bollandus has supplied this deficiency by learned remarks.]

HE was Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, and was crowned with martyrdom in the persecution of Licinius in 316, by the command of Agricolaus, governor of Cappadocia and the lesser Armenia. It is mentioned in the acts of St Eustratius, who received the crown of martyrdom in the reign of Diocletian, and is honoured on the 13th of December, that St Blase, the Bishop of Sebaste, honourably received his relics, deposited them with those of St Orestes, and punctually executed every article of the last will and testament of St Eustratius. His festival is kept a holyday in the Greek church on the 11th of February. He is mentioned in the ancient Western Martyrologies which bear the name of St Jerom. Ado and Usuard, with several more ancient manuscript Martyrologies, quoted by Chatelain, place his name on the 15th. In the holy wars his relics were dispersed over the West, and his veneration was propagated by many miraculous cures, especially of sore throats. He is the principal patron of the commonwealth of Ragusa.<sup>1</sup> No other reason than the great devotion of the people to this celebrated martyr of the church seems to have given occasion to the woolcombers to choose him the titular patron of their profession, on which account his festival is still kept by them with solemn guild at Norwich. Perhaps also his country might in part determine them to this choice, for it seems that the first branch, or, at least, hint of this manufacture was borrowed from the remotest known countries of the East, as was that of silk; or the iron combs, with which he is said to have been tormented, gave occasion to this choice.

The iron combs, hooks, racks, swords, and scaffolds, which were purpled with the blood of the martyrs, are eternal proofs of their invincible courage and constancy in the divine service. But are they not at the same time subjects of our condemnation and confusion? How weak are our resolu-

<sup>1</sup> See Bollandus, Pagi ad an. 316; Chatelain, Notes on the Martyr. p. 507; and Jos. Assemani, in Cal. Univ. ad Feb. 11, t. vi. p. 23.

tions! how base our pusillanimity and cowardice in the pursuit of virtue! We have daily renewed our most sacred baptismal engagements, and our purposes of faithfully serving God; these we have often repeated at the feet of God's ministers, and in presence of his holy altars, and we have often begun our conversion with great fervour. Yet these fair blossoms were always nipped in the bud; for want of constancy we soon fell back into our former sloth and disorders, adding to our other prevarications that of base infidelity. Instead of encountering gibbets and wild beasts, we were scared at the sight of the least difficulty, or we had not courage to make the least sacrifice of our passions, or to repulse the weakest and most contemptible assaults of the world. Its example, or that dangerous company from which we had not resolution to separate ourselves, carried us away; and we had not courage to withstand those very maxims which we ourselves condemn in the moments of our serious reflections as contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Perhaps we often flew back for fear of shadows, and out of apprehensions frequently imaginary, lest we should forfeit some temporal advantage, some useful or agreeable friend. Perhaps we were overcome by the difficulties which arose barely from ourselves, and wanted resolution to deny our senses, to subdue our passions, to renounce dangerous occasions, or to enter upon a penitential life. Blinded by self-love, have we not sheltered our dastardly pusillanimity under the cloak of pretended necessity, or even virtue?

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 3 :*

ST ANSCHARIUS, Archbishop of Hamburg and Bremen, 865 : ST BLASE : BLESSED JOHN NELSON, English martyr, 1534-1578 : ST MARGARET, surnamed " of England," who, with her mother, led a life of penance in the Holy Land and later in a Cistercian monastery, where she died about 1192. Her shrine was famous for many miracles : and ST WEREBUGHE, Abbess and patron of Chester, who died at Trentham about the end of the seventh century.

## FEBRUARY 4

### ST ANDREW CORSINI, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1373)

[From his two original lives, written, the one by a disciple, the other by Peter Andrew Castagna, a friar of his order, one hundred years after his death. See the same, compiled in Latin, by Francis Venturius, Bishop of San Severo, printed at Rome in 1620, in quarto, and abridged by the elegant Jesuit Maffei.]

THIS saint at his baptism was called Andrew, from the apostle of that name, on whose festival he was born in Florence, in 1302. The family of the Corsini was then one of the most illustrious of that commonwealth. This child was the fruit of the prayers of his pious parents, who consecrated him by vow to God before his birth. But notwithstanding the care his parents took to instil good principles into him, he spent the first part of his youth in vice and extravagance, in the company of such as were as

wicked as himself. His devout mother, Peregrina, never ceased weeping and praying for his conversion, and one day said to him, with many sighs, in the bitterness of her grief, "I see you are the wolf I saw in my sleep," giving him to understand that when with child of him she had dreamed she was brought to bed of a wolf, which, running into a church, was turned into a lamb. She added that she and her husband had in a particular manner devoted him, while in the womb, to the service of God, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and that, in consequence of his being born not for them, nor for the world, but for God, a very different kind of life from what he led was expected from him. This discourse made so strong an impression on his heart that he went immediately to the church of the Carmelite friars, and having prayed there for some time with great fervour before the altar of our Lady, he was so touched by God that he took a resolution upon the spot to return no more to his father's house, but to embrace the religious state of life professed in that convent. He was readily admitted in the year 1318, and after a novitiate of a year and some months, during which he eluded the artifices of his worldly companions, and resolutely rejected the solicitations of an uncle, who sought to draw him back into the world, he made his solemn profession. He never departed from the first fervour of his conversion. He strenuously laboured to subdue his passions by extreme humiliations, obedience even to the last person in the house, by silence and prayer; and his superiors employed him in the meanest offices, often in washing the dishes in the scullery. The progress he made in learning, particularly in the holy scriptures and in divinity, was very great. In the year 1328 he was ordained priest; but to prevent the music and feast which his family had prepared, according to custom, for the day on which he was to say his first mass, he privately withdrew to a little convent seven miles out of town, where he offered, unknown, his first-fruits to God with wonderful recollection and devotion. After some time employed in preaching at Florence, he was sent to Paris, where he studied three years, and took some degrees. He prosecuted his studies some time at Avignon with his uncle, Cardinal Corsini, and, in 1332, returning to Florence, was chosen prior of that convent by a provincial chapter. God honoured his extraordinary virtue with the gifts of prophecy and miracles; and the astonishing fruits of his example and zealous preaching made him be looked upon as a second apostle of his country. Amongst other miracles and conquests of hardened souls was the conversion of his cousin, John Corsini, an infamous gamester; and the miraculous cure of an ulcer in his neck.

The Bishop of Fiesoli, a town three miles from Florence, being dead, the chapter unanimously chose our saint to fill up the vacant see. Being informed of their proceedings, he hid himself, and remained so long concealed that the canons, despairing to find him, were going to proceed

to a second election, when, by a particular direction of divine providence, he was discovered by a child. Being consecrated bishop in the beginning of the year 1360, he redoubled his former austerities. To his hair shirt he added an iron girdle. He daily said the seven penitential psalms and the litany of the saints, and gave himself a severe discipline whilst he recited the litany. His bed was of vine-branches strewed on the floor. All his time was taken up in prayer or in his functions. Holy meditation and reading the scriptures he called his recreation from his labours. He avoided discourse with women as much as possible, and would never listen to flatterers or informers. His tenderness and care of the poor were incredible, and he had a particular regard for the bashful among them, that is, such as were ashamed to make known their distress; these he was diligent in seeking out, and assisted them with all possible secrecy. By an excellent talent for composing differences and dissensions, he never failed to reconcile persons at variance, and to appease all seditions that happened in his time, either at Fiesoli or at Florence. Urban V, on this account, sent him, vested with legatine power, to Bologna, where the nobility and people were miserably divided. He happily pacified them, and their union continued during the remainder of his life. He was accustomed every Thursday to wash, with singular charity and humility, the feet of the poor: one excused himself, alleging that his feet were full of ulcers and corruption; the saint insisted upon washing them notwithstanding, and they were immediately healed. In imitation of St Gregory the Great, he kept a list of the names of all the poor, and furnished them all with allowances. He never dismissed any without an alms, for which purpose he once miraculously multiplied bread. He was taken ill whilst he was singing high mass on Christmas night in the year 1372. His fever increasing, he gave up his happy soul to God, with a surprising joy and tranquillity, on the 6th of January, 1373, being seventy-one years and five weeks old, having been twelve years bishop. He was honoured with many miracles, and immediately canonized by the voice of the people. The state of Florence has often sensibly experienced his powerful intercession. Pope Eugenius IV allowed his relics to be exposed to public veneration. He was canonized by Urban VIII in 1629. His festival was transferred to the 4th of February. Clement XII being of this family, in conjunction with his nephew, the Marquis of Corsini, sumptuously adorned the chapel of the Carmelite friars' church in Florence, in which the saint's body is kept. He also built and endowed a magnificent independent chapel in the great church of St John Lateran, under the name of this his patron, in which the corpse of that pope is interred.

The example of all the saints confirms the fundamental maxim of our divine Redeemer—that the foundation of all solid virtue and of true

sanctity is to be laid by subduing the passions and dying to ourselves. Pride, sensuality, covetousness, and every vice, must be rooted out of the heart, the sense must be mortified, the inconstancy of the mind must be settled, and its inclination to roving and dissipation fixed by recollection, and all depraved affections curbed. Both in cloisters and in the world many Christians take pains to become virtuous by multiplying religious practices, yet lose in a great measure the fruit of their labours because they never study with their whole hearts to die to themselves. So long as self-love reigns in their souls, almost without control, this will often blind and deceive them, and will easily infect even their good works, and their devotion will be liable to a thousand illusions, and always very imperfect. Hence religious persons, after many years spent in the rigorous observance of their rule, still fail upon the least trial or contradiction which thwarts their favourite inclination, and are stopped in their spiritual progress as it were by every grain of sand in their way.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 4 :*

ST ANDREW CORSINI: ST GILBERT, Abbot, Founder of the Gilbertins: ST ISADORE of Pelusium, priest; a monk from his youth, he chose St John Chrysostom as his life's model: ST JOAN or Jane, of Valois, Queen of France, who suffered many humiliations from her husband's aversion, with patience, and finally gave herself up to the things of God, founding the Order of the nuns of the Annunciation. The Superioress in this Order is called only Ancilla, or servant. BLESSED JOHN DE BRITTO, S.J., a spiritual son of St Francis Xavier, martyred in India, 1693: ST JOSEPH OF LEONISSA, a Capuchin friar, tortured for preaching the Gospel to the Mahometans. After his banishment from Turkey, he bore the pains of a cancer with exemplary patience: ST MODAN, Abbot in Scotland in the seventh century: ST PHILEAS and ST PHILOROMUS, the former a rich noble who became Bishop of Thmuis, the second a noble governor who first admired and then emulated Philias by being martyred with him, in Egypt: and ST REMBERT, Archbishop of Bremen.

## FEBRUARY 5

### ST AGATHA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

(A.D. 251)

[We have her panegyrics, by St Aldhelm, in the seventh, and St Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople, in the ninth centuries; also a hymn in her honour among the poems of Pope Damasus, and another by St Isidore of Seville, in Bollandus, p. 596. The Greeks have interpolated her acts; but those in Latin are very ancient. They are abridged by Tillemont, t. iii. p. 409. See also Rocci Pyrrho, in Sicilia Sacra, on Palermo, Catana, and Malta.]

THE cities of Palermo and Catana, in Sicily, dispute the honour of her birth; but they do much better who, by copying her virtues, and claiming her patronage, strive to become her fellow-citizens in heaven. It is agreed that she received the crown of martyrdom at Catana, in the persecution of Decius, in the third consulship of that prince, in the year of our Lord 251. She was of a rich and illustrious family, and having been consecrated to God from her tender years, triumphed over many assaults upon her chastity. Quintianus, a man of consular dignity, bent on gratifying both his lust and avarice, imagined he should easily compass his wicked designs on Agatha's person and estate by means of the emperor's edict against

the Christians. He therefore caused her to be apprehended and brought before him at Catana. Seeing herself in the hands of the persecutors, she made this prayer: "Jesus Christ, Lord of all things, you see my heart, you know my desire—possess alone all that I am. I am your sheep, make me worthy to overcome the devil." She wept, and prayed for courage and strength all the way she went. On her appearance, Quintianus gave orders for her being put into the hands of Aphrodisia, a most wicked woman, who, with six daughters, all prostitutes, kept a common stew. The saint suffered in this infamous place assaults and stratagems against her virtue infinitely more terrible to her than any tortures or death itself. But placing her confidence in God, she never ceased with sighs and most earnest tears to implore his protection, and by it was an overmatch for all their hellish attempts the whole month she was there. Quintianus, being informed of her constancy after thirty days, ordered her to be brought before him. The virgin, in her first interrogatory, told him that to be a servant of Jesus Christ was the most illustrious nobility and true liberty. The judge, offended at her resolute answers, commanded her to be buffeted and led to prison. She entered it with great joy, recommending her future conflict to God. The next day she was arraigned a second time at the tribunal, and answered with equal constancy that Jesus Christ was her life and her salvation. Quintianus then ordered her to be stretched on the rack, which torment was usually accompanied with stripes, the tearing of the sides with iron hooks, and burning them with torches or matches. The governor, enraged to see her suffer all this with cheerfulness, commanded her breast to be tortured, and afterwards to be cut off. At which she made him this reproach: "Cruel tyrant, do you not blush to torture this part of my body, you that sucked the breasts of a woman yourself?" He remanded her to prison, with a severe order that neither salves nor food should be allowed her. But God would be himself her physician, and the apostle St Peter in a vision comforted her, healed all her wounds, and filled her dungeon with a heavenly light. Quintianus, four days after, not the least moved at the miraculous cure of her wounds, caused her to be rolled naked over live coals mixed with broken potsherds. Being carried back to prison, she made this prayer: "Lord, my Creator, you have ever protected me from the cradle; you have taken me from the love of the world, and given me patience to suffer: receive now my soul." After which words she sweetly gave up the ghost. Her name is inserted in the canon of the mass in the calendar of Carthage, as ancient as the year 530, and in all martyrologies of the Latins and Greeks. Pope Symmachus built a church in Rome on the Aurelian Way under her name, about the year 500, which is fallen to decay.<sup>1</sup> St Gregory the Great enriched a church which he purged from the Arian impiety with her

<sup>1</sup> Fronteau Cal. p. 25.

relics,<sup>1</sup> which it still possesses. This church had been rebuilt in her honour by Ricimer, general of the Western Empire, in 460. Gregory II built another famous church at Rome, under her invocation, in 726, which Clement VIII gave to the congregation of the Christian doctrine. St Gregory the Great<sup>2</sup> ordered some of her relics to be placed in the church of the monastery of St Stephen, in the Isle of Capreae, now Capri. The chief part, which remained at Catana, was carried to Constantinople by the Greek general, who drove the Saracens out of Sicily about the year 1040; these were brought back to Catana in 1127, a relation of which translation, written by Mauritius, who was then bishop, is recorded by Rocci Pyrrho and Bollandus.<sup>3</sup>

The perfect purity of intention by which St Agatha was entirely dead to the world and herself, and sought only to please God, is the circumstance which sanctified her sufferings, and rendered her sacrifice complete. The least cross which we bear, the least action which we perform in this disposition, will be a great holocaust, and a most acceptable offering. We have frequently something to offer—sometimes an aching pain in the body, at other times some trouble of mind, often some disappointment, some humbling rebuke, or reproach, or the like. If we only bear these trials with patience when others are witnesses, or if we often speak of them, or are fretful under them, or if we bear patiently public affronts or great trials, yet sink under those which are trifling, and are sensible to small or secret injuries, it is evident that we have not attained to true purity of intention in our patience; that we are not dead to ourselves. We profess ourselves ready to die for Christ, yet cannot bear the least cross or humiliation. How agreeable to our divine spouse is the sacrifice of a soul which suffers in silence, desiring to have no other witness of her patience than God alone, who sends her trials; which shuns superiority and honours, but takes all care possible that no one knows the humility or modesty of such a refusal; which suffers humiliations and seeks no comfort or reward but from God.

## THE MARTYRS OF JAPAN

[See the triumph of the martyrs of Japan, by F. Trigault, from the year 1612 to 1620; the history of Japan, by F. Crasset, to the year 1658; and that by the learned F. Charlevoix, in nine volumes; also the life of F. Spinola, &c.]

THE empire of Japan, so called from one of the islands of which it is composed, was discovered by certain Portuguese merchants about the year 1541. It is generally divided into several little kingdoms, all which obey one sovereign emperor. The capital cities are Meaco and Jedo. The manners of this people are the reverse of ours in many things. Their

<sup>1</sup> Dial. lib. iii. c. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. ep. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Feb. t. i. p. 647.



characteristic is pride, and an extravagant love of honour. They adore idols of grotesque shapes, by which they represent certain famous wicked ancestors: the chiefest are Amida and Xach. Their priests are called Bonzes, and all obey the Jaco, or high-priest. St Francis Xavier arrived in Japan in 1549, baptized great numbers, and whole provinces received the faith. The great kings of Arima, Bungo, and Omura sent a solemn embassy of obedience to Pope Gregory XIII in 1582; and in 1587 there were in Japan above two hundred thousand Christians, and among these several kings, princes, and bonzes, but in 1588, Cambacundono, the haughty emperor, having usurped the honours of a deity, commanded all the Jesuits to leave his dominions within six months: however, many remained there disguised. In 1592 the persecution was renewed, and several Japanese converts received the crown of martyrdom. The emperor Tagcosama, one of the proudest and most vicious of men, was worked up into rage and jealousy by a suspicion suggested by certain European merchants desirous of the monopoly of this trade, that the view of the missionaries in preaching the Christian faith was to facilitate the conquest of their country by the Portuguese or Spaniards. Three Jesuits and six Franciscans were crucified on a hill near Nangasaqui in 1597. The latter were partly Spaniards and partly Indians, and had at their head F. Peter Baptist, commissary of his order, a native of Avila, in Spain. As to the Jesuits, one was Paul Michi, a noble Japanese, and an eminent preacher, at that time thirty-three years old. The other two, John Gotto and James Kisai, were admitted into the Society in prison a little before they suffered. Several Japanese converts suffered with them. The martyrs were twenty-six in number, and among them were three boys who used to serve the friars at mass; two of them were fifteen years of age, and the third only twelve, yet each showed great joy and constancy in their sufferings. Of these martyrs, twenty-four had been brought to Meaco, where only a part of their left ears was cut off, by a mitigation of the sentence, which had commanded the amputation of their noses and both ears. They were conducted through many towns and public places, their cheeks stained with blood, for a terror to others. When the twenty-six soldiers of Christ were arrived at the place of execution near Nangasaqui, they were allowed to make their confession to two Jesuits of the convent in that town, and being fastened to crosses by cords and chains about their arms and legs, and an iron collar about their necks, were raised into the air, the foot of each cross falling into a hole prepared for it in the ground. The crosses were planted in a row, about four feet asunder, and each martyr had an executioner near him with a spear ready to pierce his side; for such is the Japanese manner of crucifixion. As soon as all the crosses were planted, the executioners lifted up their lances, and at a signal given, all pierced the martyrs almost in the same instant; upon which they expired,

and went to receive the reward of their sufferings. Their blood and garments were procured by Christians, and miracles were wrought by them. Urban VIII ranked them among the martyrs, and they are honoured on the 5th of February, the day of their triumph. The rest of the missionaries were put on board a vessel, and carried out of the dominions, except twenty-eight priests, who stayed behind in disguise. Tagcosama dying, ordered his body should not be burned, as was the custom in Japan, but preserved enshrined in his palace of Fuximi, that he might be worshipped among the gods under the title of the new god of war. The most stately temple in the empire was built to him, and his body deposited in it. The Jesuits returned soon after, and though the missionaries were only a hundred in number, they converted, in 1599, forty thousand, and in 1600, above thirty thousand, and built fifty churches; for the people were highly scandalized to see him worshipped as a god whom they had remembered a most covetous, proud, and vicious tyrant. But in 1602, Cubosama renewed the bloody persecution, and many Japanese converts were beheaded, crucified, or burned. In 1614, new cruelties were exercised to overcome their constancy, as by bruising their feet between certain pieces of wood, cutting off or squeezing their limbs one after another, applying red-hot irons or slow fires, flaying off the skin of the fingers, putting burning coals to their hands, tearing off the flesh with pincers, or thrusting reeds into all parts of their bodies, and turning them about to tear their flesh, till they should say they would forsake their faith: all which, innumerable persons, even children, bore with invincible constancy till death.

In 1616, Xogun succeeding his father Cubosama in the empire, surpassed him in cruelty. The most illustrious of these religious heroes was F. Charles Spinola. He was of a noble Genoese family, and entered the Society at Nola, whilst his uncle cardinal Spinola was bishop of that city. Out of zeal and a desire of martyrdom, he begged to be sent on the Japanese mission. He arrived there in 1602; laboured many years in that mission, gained many to Christ by his mildness, and lived in great austerity, for his usual food was only a little rice and herbs. He suffered four years a most cruel imprisonment, during which, in burning fevers, he was not able to obtain of his keepers a drop of cold water out of meals: yet he wrote from his dungeon: "Father, how sweet and delightful is it to suffer for Jesus Christ! I have learned this better by experience than I am able to express, especially since we are in these dungeons where we fast continually. The strength of my body fails me, but my joy increases as I see death draw nearer. O what a happiness for me, if next Easter I shall sing the heavenly Alleluia in the company of the blessed!" In a long letter to his cousin Maximilian Spinola, he said, "Oh, if you had tasted the delights with which God fills the souls of those who serve him and suffer for him, how would you condemn all that the world can

promise! I now begin to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, since for his love I am in prison, where I suffer much. But I assure you, that when I am fainting with hunger, God hath fortified me by his sweet consolations, so that I have looked upon myself as well recompensed for his service. And though I were yet to pass many years in prison, the time would appear short, through the extreme desire which I feel of suffering for him, who even here so well repays our labours. Besides other sickness, I have been afflicted with a continual fever a hundred days without any remedies or proper nourishment. All this time my heart was so full of joy that it seemed to me too narrow to contain it. I have never felt any equal to it, and I thought myself at the gates of paradise." His joy was excessive at the news that he was condemned to be burnt alive, and he never ceased to thank God for so great a mercy, of which he owned himself unworthy. He was conducted from his last prison at Omura to Nangasaqui, where fifty martyrs suffered together on a hill within sight of that city, nine Jesuits, four Franciscans, and six Dominicans, the rest seculars: twenty-five were burned, the rest beheaded. The twenty-five stakes were fixed all in a row, and the martyrs tied to them. Fire was set to the end of the pile of wood twenty-five feet from the martyrs, and gradually approached them, two hours before it reached them. F. Spinola stood unmoved, with his eyes lifted up towards heaven, till the cords which tied him being burnt, he fell into the flames, and was consumed on the 2nd of September, in 1622, being fifty-eight years old. Many others, especially Jesuits, suffered variously, being either burnt at slow fires, crucified, beheaded, or thrown into a burning mountain, or hung with their heads downward in pits, which cruel torment usually put an end to their lives in three or four days.

In 1639, the Portuguese and all other Europeans, except the Dutch, were forbid to enter Japan, even for trade: the very ambassadors which the Portuguese sent thither were beheaded. In 1642, five Jesuits landed secretly in Japan, but were soon discovered, and after cruel tortures were hung in pits till they expired. Thus hath Japan encouraged the church militant, and filled the triumphant with glorious martyrs: though only the first mentioned have as yet been publicly declared such by the holy See, who are mentioned in the new edition of the Roman Martyrology published by Benedict XIV in 1749.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 5:*

ST ABRAAMIUS, Bishop of Arbela in Assyria: ST AGATHA: ST ALICE or Adelaide, Abbess of Our Lady's in Cologne, who died in 1015: ST AVITIS, Archbishop of Vienne: THE HEROIC CHRISTIAN MARTYRS OF CHINA: these included two Jesuits, four Dominicans, and many others: THE GLORIOUS MARTYRS WHO SUFFERED FOR CHRIST IN JAPAN, three steadfast boys being amongst them: and MARTYRS IN PONTUS under Dioclesian, greatly tortured ere God called them to their reward.

FEBRUARY 6

## ST DOROTHY, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

[See St Aldhelm, Ado, Usuard, &amp;c., in Bollandus, p. 771.]

ST ALDHELM relates from her acts,<sup>1</sup> that Fabritius, the governor of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, inflicted on her most cruel torments, because she refused to marry, or to adore idols; that she converted two apostate women sent to seduce her; and that being condemned to be beheaded, she converted one Theophilus, by sending him certain fruits and flowers miraculously obtained of her heavenly spouse. She seems to have suffered under Diocletian. Her body is kept in the celebrated church which bears her name, beyond the Tiber, in Rome. She is mentioned on this day in the ancient Martyrology under the name of St Jerom. There was another holy virgin, whom Rufin calls Dorothy, a rich and noble lady of the city of Alexandria, who suffered torments and a voluntary banishment, to preserve her faith and chastity against the brutish lust and tyranny of the emperor Maximinus, in the year 308, as is recorded by Eusebius<sup>2</sup> and Rufinus;<sup>3</sup> but many take this latter, whose name is not mentioned by Eusebius, to be the famous St Catherine of Alexandria.

The blood of the martyrs flourished in its hundred-fold increase, as St Justin has well observed: "We are slain with the sword, but we increase and multiply; the more we are persecuted and destroyed, the more are added to our numbers. As a vine, by being pruned and cut close, shoots forth new suckers, and bears a greater abundance of fruit; so is it with us."<sup>4</sup> Among other false reflections, the baron of Montesquieu, an author too much admired by many, writes:<sup>5</sup> "It is hardly possible that Christianity should ever be established in China. Vows of virginity, the assembling of women in the churches, their necessary intercourse with the ministers of religion, their participation of the sacraments, auricular confession, the marrying but one wife—all this oversets the manners and customs, and strikes at the religion and laws of the country." Could he forget that the gospel overcame all these impediments where it was first established, in spite of the most inveterate prejudices, and of all worldly opposition from the great and the learned; whereas philosophy, though patronized by princes, could never in any age introduce its rules even into one city. In vain did the philosopher Plotinus solicit the emperor Gallienus to rebuild a ruined city in Campania, that he and his disciples might establish in it the republic of Plato; a system in some points flattering the passions of

<sup>1</sup> L. de Laud. Virgin. c. 25.<sup>4</sup> Apol. 2, ol. 1.<sup>2</sup> L. viii. c. 14.<sup>5</sup> L'Esprit des Loix, b. xix. 18.<sup>3</sup> L. i. c. 17.

men, almost as Mahometism fell in with the prejudices and passions of the nations where it prevails. So visibly is the church the work of God.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 6 :*

ST AMANDUS, Bishop and Confessor, who forsook the world in his twentieth year : ST BARSANUPHIUS, who lived as an anchorite in the Holy Land, " a life rather angelical than human " : ST DOROTHY : BLESSED JOHN SALES, S.J., and BROTHER WILLIAM SAULTMOUCHE, the latter a Jesuit lay brother, both martyred by the Huguenots, 1593, for the truth of the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1926 : and ST VEDAST, Bishop of Arles, for whom the learned Alcuin, who wrote his life and composed an office and a Mass in his honour, had an extraordinary devotion.

## FEBRUARY 7

### ST ROMUALD, ABBOT, C., FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF CAMALDOLI

(A.D. 1027)

[From his life, written by St Peter Damian, fifteen years after his death. See also Mugnotii. *Eremiti Camaldul. descriptio*, Romæ, an. 1570. *Historiarum Camaldulensium*, libri iii. auth. Aug. Florentino, in 4to, Florentiæ, 1575. *Earundem pars posterior*, in 4to, Venetiis, 1579. *Dissertationes Camaldulenses*, in quibus agitur de institutione Ordinis, ætate St Romualdi, &c. auth. Guidone Grando, ej. Ord. Lucæ, 1707. *The Lives of the Saints of this Order*, in Italian, by Razzi, 1600, and in Latin, by F. Thomas de Minis, in two vols. in 4to., an. 1605, 1606. *Annales Camaldulenses Ordinis St Benedicti*, auctoribus Jo. Ben Mittarelli, abbate, et Ans. Costadoni, presbyteris et monachis à Cong. Camald. Venetiis, in four vols. fol., of which the fourth is dedicated to Pope Clement XIII in 1760.]

ST ROMUALD, of the family of the dukes of Ravenna, called Honesti, was born in that capital about the year 956. Being brought up in the maxims of the world, in softness and the love of pleasures, he grew every day more and more enslaved to his passions; yet he often made a resolution of undertaking something remarkable for the honour of God; and when he went a hunting, if he found an agreeable solitary place in the woods, he would stop in it to pray, and would cry out, " How happy were the ancient hermits, who had such habitations! With what tranquillity could they serve God, free from the tumult of the world! " His father, whose name was Sergius, a worldly man, agreed to decide a dispute he had with a relation about an estate by a duel. Romuald was shocked at the criminal design; but by threats of being disinherited if he refused, was engaged by his father to be present as a spectator: Sergius slew his adversary. Romuald, then twenty years of age, struck with horror at the crime that had been perpetrated, though he had concurred in it no further than by his presence, thought himself, however, obliged to expiate it by a severe course of penance for forty days in the neighbouring Benedictine monastery of Classis, within four miles of Ravenna. He performed great austerities, and prayed and wept almost without intermission. His compunction and fervour made all these exercises seem easy and sweet to him; and the young nobleman became every day more and more penetrated with the fear and love of God. The good example which he saw, and the discourses

of a pious lay-brother, who waited on him, concerning eternity and the contempt of the world, wrought so powerfully upon him, that he petitioned in full chapter to be admitted as a penitent to the religious habit. After some demurs, through their apprehensions of his father's resentment, whose next heir the saint was, his request was granted. He passed seven years in this house in so great fervour and austerity that his example became odious to certain tepid monks, who could not bear such a continual reproach of their sloth. They were more exasperated when his fervour prompted him to reprove their conduct, insomuch that some of the most abandoned formed a design upon his life, the execution of which he prevented by leaving that monastery with the abbot's consent, and retiring into the neighbourhood of Venice, where he put himself under the direction of Marinus, a holy hermit, who there led an austere ascetic life. Under this master, Romuald made great progress in every virtue belonging to a religious state of life.

Peter Urseoli was then doge of Venice. He had been unjustly raised to that dignity two years before by a faction which had assassinated his predecessor Peter Candiano; in which conspiracy he is said by some to have been an accomplice: though this is denied by the best Venetian historians.<sup>1</sup> This murder, however, paved the way for his advancement to the sovereignty, which the stings of his conscience would not suffer him quietly to enjoy. This put him upon consulting St Guarinus, a holy abbot of Catalonia, then at Venice, about what he was to do to be saved. The advice of St Marinus and St Romuald was also desired. These three unanimously agreed in proposing a monastic state, as affording the best opportunities for expiating his crimes. Urseoli acquiesced, and, under pretence of joining with his family at their villa, where he had ordered a great entertainment, set out privately with St Guarinus, St Romuald, and John Gradenigo, a Venetian nobleman of singular piety, and his son-in-law John Moresini, for St Guarinus's monastery of St Michael of Cusan, in that part of Catalonia which was then subject to France. Here Urseoli and Gradenigo made their monastic profession: Marinus and Romuald, leaving them under the conduct of Guarinus, retired into a desert near Cusan, and there led an eremetical life. Many flocked to them, and Romuald being made superior, first practised himself what he taught others, joining rigorous fasts, solitude, and continual prayer with hard manual labour. He had an extraordinary ardour for prayer, which he exceedingly recommended to his disciples, in whom he could not bear

<sup>1</sup> Sanuti tells us that St Peter Urseoli, from his cradle, devoted himself with his whole heart to the divine service, and proposed to himself in all his actions the holy will and the greater glory of God. He built in the church of St Mark a chapel, in which the body of that evangelist was secretly laid, the place being known by very few. Being chosen doge, he refused that dignity for a long time with great obstinacy, but at length suffered himself to be overcome by the importunity of the people. He had held it only two years and eight months, when he retired. Sanuti, *Vite de Duchi di Venezia*, c. 976. Muratori, *Rerum Italicar. Scriptores*, t. xxii. p. 564

to see the least sloth or tepidity with regard to the discharge of this duty; saying, they had better recite one psalm with fervour than a hundred with less devotion. His own fasts and mortifications were extremely rigorous, but he was more indulgent to others, and in particular to Urseoli, who had exchanged his monastery for St Romuald's desert, where he lived under his conduct; who, persevering in his penitential state, made a most holy end, and is honoured in Venice as a saint, with an office, on the 14th of January: and in the Roman Martyrology, published by Benedict XIV, on the 10th of that month.

Romuald, in the beginning of his conversion and retreat from the world, was molested with various temptations. The devil sometimes directly solicited him to vice; at other times he represented to him what he had forsaken, and that he had left it to ungrateful relations. He would sometimes suggest that what he did could not be agreeable to God; at other times, that his labours and difficulties were too heavy for man to bear. These and the like attempts of the devil he defeated by watching and prayer, in which he passed the whole night; and the devil strove in vain to divert him from this holy exercise by shaking his whole cell, and threatening to bury him in the ruins. Five years of grievous interior conflicts and buffetings of the enemy wrought in him a great purity of heart and prepared him for most extraordinary heavenly communications. The conversion of Count Oliver, or Oliban, lord of that territory, added to his spiritual joy. That count, from a voluptuous worldling and profligate liver, became a sincere penitent, and embraced the order of St Benedict. He carried great treasures with him to Mount Cassino, but left his estate to his son. The example of Romuald had also such an influence on Sergius, his father, that to make atonement for his past sins and enormities, he had entered the monastery of St Severus, near Ravenna; but after some time spent there, he yielded so far to the devil's temptations as to meditate a return into the world. This was a sore affliction to our saint, and determined him to return to Italy, to dissuade his father from leaving his monastery. He arrived there in 994, and made use of all the authority his superiority in religion gave him over his father; and by his exhortations, tears, and prayers, brought him to such an extraordinary degree of compunction and sorrow as to prevail with him to lay aside all thoughts of leaving his monastery, where he spent the remainder of his days in great fervour, and died with the reputation of sanctity.

Romuald, having acquitted himself of his duty towards his father, retired into the marsh of Classis, and lived in a cell, remote from all mankind. The devil pursued him here with his former malice; he sometimes overwhelmed his imagination with melancholy, and once scourged him cruelly in his cell. Romuald at length cried out, "Sweetest Jesus, dearest Jesus, why hast thou forsaken me? hast thou entirely delivered me over

to my enemies?" At that sweet name the wicked spirits betook themselves to flight, and such an excess of divine sweetness and compunction filled the breast of Romuald that he melted into tears, and his heart seemed quite dissolved. He sometimes insulted his spiritual enemies, and cried out, "Are all your forces spent? have you no more engines against a poor despicable servant of God?" Not long after, the monks of Classis chose Romuald for their abbot. The emperor Otho III, who was then at Ravenna, made use of his authority to engage the saint to accept the charge, and went in person to visit him in his cell, where he passed the night lying on the saint's poor bed. But nothing could make Romuald consent till a synod of bishops then assembled at Ravenna compelled him to it by threats of excommunication. The saint's inflexible zeal for the punctual observance of monastic discipline soon made these monks repent of their choice, which they manifested by their irregular and mutinous behaviour. The saint, being of a mild disposition, bore with it for some time, in hopes of bringing them to a right sense of their duty. At length, finding all his endeavours to reform them ineffectual, he came to a resolution of leaving them, and went to the emperor, then besieging Tivoli, to acquaint him of it; whom, when he could not prevail upon to accept of his resignation, the saint, in the presence of the Archbishop of Ravenna, threw down his crosier at his feet. This interview proved very happy for Tivoli; for the emperor, though he had condemned that city to plunder, the inhabitants having rebelled and killed Duke Matholin, their governor, spared it at the intercession of St Romuald. Otho having also, contrary to his solemn promise upon oath, put one Crescentius, a Roman senator, to death, who had been the leader in the rebellion of Tivoli, and made his widow his concubine, he not only performed a severe public penance enjoined him by the saint, as his confessor, but promised, by St Romuald's advice, to abdicate his crown and retire into a convent during life; but this he did not live to perform. The saint's remonstrances had a like salutary effect on Thamn, the emperor's favourite, prime-minister, and accomplice in the treachery before mentioned, who, with several other courtiers, received the religious habit at the hands of St Romuald, and spent the remainder of his days in retirement and penance. It was a very edifying sight to behold several young princes and noblemen, who a little before had been remarkable for their splendid appearance and sumptuous living, now leading an obscure, solitary, penitential life in humility, penance, fasting, cold, and labour. They prayed, sung psalms, and worked. They all had their several employments: some spun, others knit, others tilled the ground, gaining their poor livelihood by the sweat of their brow. St Boniface surpassed all the rest in fervour and mortification. He was the emperor's near relation, and so dear to him that he never called him by any other name than, My soul!



He excelled in music, and in all the liberal arts and sciences, and after having spent many years under the discipline of St Romuald, was ordained bishop, and commissioned by the pope to preach to the infidels of Russia, whose king he converted by his miracles, but was beheaded by the king's brothers, who were themselves afterwards converted on seeing the miracles wrought on occasion of the martyr's death. Several other monks of St Romuald's monastery met with the same cruel treatment in Sclavonia, whither they were sent by the pope to preach the gospel.

St Romuald built many other monasteries, and continued three years at one he founded near Parenzo, one year in the community to settle it, and two in a neighbouring cell. Here he laboured some time under a spiritual dryness, not being able to shed one tear; but he ceased not to continue his devotions with greater fervour. At last being in his cell, at those words of the psalmist, "I will give thee understanding, and will instruct thee," he was suddenly visited by God with an extraordinary light and spirit of compunction, which from that time never left him. By a supernatural light, the fruit of prayer, he understood the holy scriptures, and wrote an exposition of the psalms full of admirable unction. He often foretold things to come, and gave directions full of heavenly wisdom to all who came to consult him, especially to his religious who frequently came to ask his advice how to advance in virtue, and how to resist temptations; he always sent them back to their cells full of an extraordinary cheerfulness. Through his continual weeping he thought others had a like gift, and often said to his monks, "Do not weep too much; for it prejudices the sight and the head." It was his desire, whenever he could conveniently avoid it, not to say mass before a number of people, because he could not refrain from tears in offering that august sacrifice. The contemplation of the Divinity often transported him out of himself; melting in tears, and burning with love, he would cry out: "Dear Jesus! my dear Jesus! my unspeakable desire! my joy! joy of the angels! sweetness of the saints!" and the like, which he was heard to speak with a jubilation which cannot be expressed. To propagate the honour of God, he resolved, by the advice of the Bishop of Pola and others, to exchange his remote desert for one where he could better advance his holy institute. The Bishop of Parenzo forbade any boat to carry him off, desiring earnestly to detain him; but the Bishop of Pola sent one to fetch him. He miraculously calmed a storm at sea, and landed safe at Capreola. Coming to Bifurcum, he found the monks' cells too magnificent, and would lodge in none but that of one Peter, a man of extraordinary austerity, who never would live in a cell larger than four cubits.

The saint had always burnt with an ardent desire of martyrdom, which was much increased by the glorious crowns of some of his disciples,

especially of St Boniface. At last, not able to contain the ardour of his charity and desire to give his life for his Redeemer, he obtained the pope's licence, and set out to preach the gospel in Hungary, in which mission some of his disciples accompanied him. He had procured two of them to be consecrated archbishops by the pope, declining himself the episcopal dignity; but a violent illness which seized him on his entering Hungary, and returned as often as he attempted to proceed on his intended design, was a plain indication of the will of God in this matter; so he returned home with seven of his associates. The rest, with the two archbishops, went forward, and preached the faith under the holy king, St Stephen, suffering much for Christ, but none obtained the crown of martyrdom. Romuald in his return built some monasteries in Germany, and laboured to reform others; but this drew on him many persecutions. Yet all, even the great ones of the world, trembled in his presence. He refused to accept either water or wood, without paying for it, from Raynerius, marquis of Tuscia, because that prince had married the wife of a relation whom he had killed. Raynerius, though a sovereign, used to say that neither the emperor nor any mortal on earth could strike him with so much awe as Romuald's presence did: so powerful was the impression which the Holy Ghost, dwelling in his breast, made on the most haughty sinners. Returning from Rome, he made a long stay at Mount Sitria. A young nobleman addicted to impurity, being exasperated at the saint's severe remonstrances, had the impudence to accuse him of a scandalous crime. The monks, by a surprising levity, believed the calumny, enjoined him a most severe penance, forbade him to say mass, and excommunicated him. He bore all with patience and in silence, as if really he had been guilty, and refrained from going to the altar for six months. In the seventh month he was admonished by God to obey no longer so unjust and irregular a sentence, pronounced without any authority and without grounds. He accordingly said mass again, and with such raptures of devotion as obliged him to continue long absorbed in ecstasy. He passed seven years in Sitria in his cell in strict silence, but his example did the office of his tongue and moved many to penance. In his old age, instead of relaxing, he increased his austerities and fasts. He had three hair-shirts which he now and then changed. He never would admit of the least thing to give a savour to the herbs or meal-gruel on which he supported himself. If any thing was brought him better dressed, he, for the greater self-denial, applied it to his nostrils, and said, "Oh, gluttony, gluttony, thou shalt never taste this: perpetual war is declared against thee." His disciples also were remarkable for their austere lives, went always barefoot, and looked excessive pale with continual fasting. No other drink was known among them but water, except in sickness. St Romuald wrought in this place many miraculous cures of the sick. At

last, having settled his disciples here in a monastery which he had built for them, he departed for Bifurcum.

The most famous of all his monasteries is that of Camaldoli, near Arezzo, in Tuscany, on the frontiers of the ecclesiastical state, thirty miles east from Florence, founded by him about the year 1009. It lies beyond a mountain, very difficult to pass over, the descent from which on the opposite side is almost a direct precipice looking down upon a pleasant large valley, which then belonged to a lord called Maldoli, who gave it the saint, and from him it retained the name Camaldoli.<sup>1</sup> In this place St Romuald built a monastery, and by the several observances he added to St Benedict's rule gave birth to that new order called Camaldoli, in which he united the cenobitic and eremitical life. After seeing in a vision his monks mounting up a ladder to heaven all in white he changed their habit from black to white. The hermitage is two short miles distant from the monastery. It is a mountain quite overshadowed by a dark wood of fir-trees. In it are seven clear springs of water. The very sight of this solitude in the midst of the forest helps to fill the mind with compunction and a love of heavenly contemplation. On entering it, we meet with a chapel of St Antony for travellers to pray in before they advance any further. Next are the cells and lodgings for the porters. Somewhat further is the church, which is large, well built, and richly adorned. Over the door is a clock, which strikes so loud that it may be heard all over the desert. On the left side of the church is the cell in which St Romuald lived when he first established these hermits. Their cells, built of stone, have each a little garden walled round. A constant fire is allowed to be kept in every cell on account of the coldness of the air throughout the year: each cell has also a chapel in which they may say mass: they call their superior, major. The whole hermitage is now enclosed with a wall: none are allowed to go out of it; but they may walk in the woods and alleys within the inclosure at discretion. Every thing is sent them from the monastery in the valley: their food is every day brought to each cell; and all are supplied with wood and necessities that they may have no dissipation or hindrance in their contemplation. Many hours of the day is allotted to particular exercises; and no rain or snow stops any one from meeting in the church to assist at the divine office. They are obliged to strict silence in all public common places; and every where during their Lents, also on Sundays, Holydays, Fridays, and other days of abstinence, and always from Complin till prime the next day.

For a severer solitude, St Romuald added a third kind of life; that of a recluse. After a holy life in the hermitage, the superior grants leave to any that ask it, and seem called by God, to live for ever shut up in their cells, never speaking to any one but to the superior when he visits them,

<sup>1</sup> Contracted from Campo Maldoli.

and to the brother who brings them necessities. Their prayers and austerities are doubled, and their fasts more severe and more frequent. St Romuald condemned himself to this kind of life for several years; and fervent imitators have never since failed in this solitude.

St Romuald died in his monastery in the valley of Castro in the marquisate of Ancona. As he was born about the year 956, he must have died seventy years and some months old, not a hundred and twenty, as the present copies of his life have it. The day of his death was the 19th of June; but his principal feast is appointed by Clement VIII on the 7th of February, the day of his translation. His body was found entire and uncorrupt five years after his death, and again in 1466. But his tomb being sacrilegiously opened, and his body stolen in 1480, it fell to dust, in which state it was translated to Fabriano, and there deposited in the great church, all but the remains of one arm, sent to Camaldoli. God has honoured his relics with many miracles. The order of Camaldoli is now divided into five congregations, under so many generals or majors. The life of the hermits is very severe, though something mitigated since the time of St Romuald. The Cenobites are more like Benedictines, and perhaps were not directly established by St Romuald, says F. Helyot.

### ST RICHARD, KING AND CONFESSOR

THIS saint was an English prince, in the kingdom of the West-Saxons, and was perhaps deprived of his inheritance by some revolution in the state: or he renounced it, to be more at liberty to dedicate himself to the pursuit of Christian perfection. His three children, Winebald, Willibald, and Warburga, are all honoured as saints. Taking with him his two sons, he undertook a pilgrimage of penance and devotion, and sailing from Hamble-haven, landed in Neustria on the western coasts of France. He made a considerable stay at Rouen, and made his devotions in the most holy places that lay in his way through France. Being arrived at Lucca in Italy, in his road to Rome, he there died suddenly, about the year 722, and was buried in St Fridian's church there. His relics are venerated to this day in the same place, and his festival kept at Lucca with singular devotion. St Richard, when living, obtained by his prayers the recovery of his younger son Willibald, whom he laid at the foot of a great crucifix erected in a public place in England, when the child's life was despaired of in a grievous sickness; and since his death, many have experienced the miraculous power of his intercession with God, especially where his relics invite the devotion of the faithful. His festival is kept at Lucca, and his name honoured in the Roman Martyrology on the 7th of February. See the Life of St Willibald by his cousin, a nun of Heidenheim,

in Canisius's *Lectiones Antiquæ*, with the notes of Basnage. Henschenius, Feb. t. ii. p. 70.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 7 :*

ST AUGULUS, styled by some bishop and by others martyr in the old MS. copies of the Western Martyrologies: ST RICHARD: ST ROMUALD, Abbot and Confessor, whose life was written by Saint Peter Damian: ST THEODORUS of Heraclea, who glorified God by his martyrdom in 319: BLESSED THOMAS SHERWOOD, English martyr, 1551-1578: and ST TRESAIN, a holy Irish priest who preached to the French; he is greatly venerated at Avenay in Champagne.

FEBRUARY 8

## ST JOHN OF MATHA, FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE TRINITARIANS

(A.D. 1218)

[From several bulls of Innocent III and the many authors of his life, especially that compiled by Robert Gaguin, the learned general of this order, in 1490, collected by Baillet, and the *Hist. des Ordres Relig.* by F. Helyot. See also *Annales Ordinis SS. Trinitatis*, auctore Bon. Baro, Ord. Minor. Romæ, 1684, and *Regula et Statuta Ord. SS. Trinitatis*, in 12mo, 1570.]

ST JOHN was born of very pious and noble parents, at Faucon, on the borders of Provence, June the 24th, 1169, and was baptized John, in honour of St John the Baptist. His mother dedicated him to God by a vow from his infancy. His father Euphemius sent him to Aix, where he learned grammar, fencing, riding, and other exercises fit for a young nobleman. But his chief attention was to advance in virtue. He gave the poor a considerable part of his money his parents sent him for his own use; he visited the hospital every Friday, assisting the poor sick, dressing and cleansing their sores, and affording them all the comfort in his power.

Being returned home, he begged his father's leave to continue the pious exercises he had begun, and retired to a little hermitage not far from Faucon, with the view of living at a distance from the world, and united to God alone by mortification and prayer. But finding his solitude interrupted by the frequent visits of his friends, he desired his father's consent to go to Paris to study divinity, which he easily obtained. He went through these more sublime studies with extraordinary success, and proceeded doctor of divinity with uncommon applause, though his modesty gave him a reluctancy to that honour. He was soon after ordained priest, and said his first mass in the Bishop of Paris's chapel, at which the bishop himself, Maurice de Sully, the abbots of St Victor and of St Genevieve, and the rector of the university assisted; admiring the graces of heaven in him, which appeared in his extraordinary devotion on this occasion, as well as at his ordination.

On the day he said his first mass, by a particular inspiration from God, he came to a resolution of devoting himself to the occupation of ransoming Christian slaves from the captivity they groaned under among the infidels; considering it as one of the highest acts of charity with

respect both to their souls and bodies. But before he entered upon so important a work, he thought it needful to spend some time in retirement, prayer, and mortification; and having heard of a holy hermit, St Felix Valois, living in a great wood near Gandelu, in the diocese of Meux, he repaired to him and begged he would admit him into his solitude, and instruct him in the practice of perfection. Felix soon discovered him to be no novice, and would not treat him as a disciple, but as a companion. It is incredible what progress these two holy solitaries made in the paths of virtue, by perpetual prayer, contemplation, fasting, and watching.

One day, sitting together on the bank of a spring, John disclosed to Felix the design he had conceived on the day on which he said his first mass, to succour the Christians under the Mahometan slavery, and spoke so movingly upon the subject that Felix was convinced that the design was from God, and offered him his joint concurrence to carry it into execution. They took some time to recommend it to God by prayer and fasting, and then set out for Rome in the midst of a severe winter, towards the end of the year 1197, to obtain the pope's benediction. They found Innocent III promoted to the chair of St Peter, who being already informed of their sanctity and charitable design by letters of recommendation from the Bishop of Paris, his holiness received them as two angels from heaven, lodged them in his own palace, and gave them many long private audiences. After which he assembled the cardinals and some bishops in the palace of St John Lateran, and asked their advice. After their deliberations he ordered a fast and particular prayers to know the will of heaven. At length being convinced that these two holy men were led by the spirit of God, and that great advantages would accrue to the church from such an institute, he consented to their erecting a new religious order, and declared St John the first general minister. The Bishop of Paris, and the abbot of St Victor, were ordered to draw up their rules, which the pope approved by a bull in 1198. He ordered the religious to wear a white habit, with a red and blue cross on the breast, and to take the name of the order of the Holy Trinity. He confirmed it some time after, adding new privileges by a second bull, dated in 1209.

The two founders having obtained the pope's blessing and certain indults or privileges, returned to France, presented themselves to the king, Philip Augustus, who authorized the establishment of their order in his kingdom, and favoured it with his liberalities. Gaucher III, lord of Chatillon, gave them land whereon to build a convent. Their number increasing, the same lord, seconded by the king, gave them Cerfroid, the place in which St John and St Felix concerted the first plan of their institute. It is situated in Brie, on the confines of Valois. This house of Cerfroid, or De Cervo frigido, is the chief of the order. The two saints founded many other convents in France, and sent several of their religious

to accompany the counts of Flanders and Blois, and other lords, to the holy war. Pope Innocent III wrote to recommend these religious to Miramolin, king of Morocco; and St John sent thither two of his religious in 1201, who redeemed one hundred and eighty-six Christian slaves the first voyage. The year following, St John went himself to Tunis, where he purchased the liberty of one hundred and ten more. He returned into Provence, and there received great charities, which he carried into Spain, and redeemed many in captivity under the Moors. On his return he collected large alms among the Christians towards this charitable undertaking. His example produced a second order of Mercy, instituted by St Peter Nolasco, in 1235.

St John made a second voyage to Tunis in 1210, in which he suffered much from the infidels, enraged at his zeal and success in exhorting the poor slaves to patience and constancy in their faith. As he was returning with one hundred and twenty slaves he had ransomed, the barbarians took away the helm from his vessel and tore all its sails, that they might perish in the sea. The saint, full of confidence in God, begged him to be their pilot, and hung up his companions' cloaks for sails, and, with a crucifix in his hands kneeling on the deck, singing psalms, after a prosperous voyage, they all landed safe at Ostia, in Italy. Felix, by this time, had greatly propagated his order in France, and obtained for it a convent in Paris, in a place where stood before a chapel of St Mathurin, whence these religious in France are called Mathurins.

St John lived two years more in Rome, which he employed in exhorting all to penance with great energy and fruit. He died on the 21st of December, in 1213, aged sixty-one. He was buried in his church of St Thomas, where his monument yet remains, though his body has been translated into Spain. Pope Honorius III confirmed the rule of this order a second time. By the first rule they were not permitted to buy any thing for their sustenance except bread, pulse, herbs, oil, eggs, milk, cheese, and fruit, never flesh or fish: however, they might eat flesh on the principal festivals, on condition it was given them. They were not, in travelling, to ride on any beasts but asses.

When we consider the zeal and joy with which the saints sacrificed themselves for their neighbours, how must we blush at and condemn our insensibility at the spiritual and the corporal calamities of others! The saints regarded affronts, labours, and pains as nothing for the service of others in Christ: we cannot bear the least word or roughness of temper.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 8 :*

ST CUTHMAN, formerly much honoured in England. Born in the eighth century, of pious parents, "he never once transgressed their orders," and, after their deaths, spent a life of poverty and mortification: ST JOHN OF MATHA: ST PAUL, Bishop of Verdun, died in 631: ST STEPHEN of Grandmont, 1124, son of the virtuous Viscount of Thiers, who lived in the desert for fifty years and drew many souls to God.

FEBRUARY 9

## ST NICEPHORUS, MARTYR

(A.D. 260)

[From his genuine acts in Ruinart, p. 244; Tillemont, t. iv. p. 17.]

THERE dwelt in Antioch a priest called Sapricius and a layman named Nicephorus, who had been linked together for many years by the strictest friendship. But the enemy of mankind sowing between them the seeds of discord, this their friendship was succeeded by the most implacable hatred, and they declined meeting each other in the streets. Thus it continued a considerable time. At length Nicephorus, entering into himself, and reflecting on the grievousness of the sin of hatred, resolved on seeking a reconciliation. He accordingly deputed some friends to go to Sapricius to beg his pardon, promising him all reasonable satisfaction for the injury done him. But the priest refused to forgive him. Nicephorus sent other friends to him on the same errand, but though they pressed and entreated him to be reconciled, Sapricius was inflexible. Nicephorus sent a third time, but to no purpose, Sapricius having shut his ears not to men only, but to Christ himself, who commands us to forgive as we ourselves hope to be forgiven. Nicephorus, finding him deaf to the remonstrances of their common friends, went in person to his house and casting himself at his feet, owned his fault, and begged pardon for Christ's sake, but all in vain.

The persecution suddenly began to rage under Valerian and Gallien in the year 260. Sapricius was apprehended, and brought before the governor, who asked him his name.

"It is Sapricius," answered he.

*Gov.* "Of what profession are you?"

*Sap.* "I am a Christian."

*Gov.* "Are you of the clergy?"

*Sap.* "I have the honour to be a priest." He added, "We Christians acknowledge one Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who is God—the only and true God, who created heaven and earth. The gods of nations are devils."

The president, exasperated at his answer, gave orders for him to be put into an engine like a screw-press, which the tyrants had invented to torment the faithful.

The excessive pain of this torture did not shake Sapricius's constancy, and he said to the judges, "My body is in your power, but my soul you cannot touch. Only my Saviour Jesus Christ is master of this."



The president, seeing him so resolute, pronounced this sentence: "Sapricius, priest of the Christians, who is ridiculously persuaded that he shall rise again, shall be delivered over to the executioner of public justice to have his head severed from his body, because he has contemned the edict of the emperors."

Sapricius seemed to receive the sentence with great cheerfulness, and was in haste to arrive at the place of execution in hopes of his crown. Nicephorus ran out to meet him, and casting himself at his feet, said, "Martyr of Jesus Christ, forgive me my offence." But Sapricius made him no answer. Nicephorus waited for him in another street which he was to pass through, and as soon as he saw him coming up, broke through the crowd, and falling again at his feet, conjured him to pardon the fault he had committed against him, through frailty rather than design. This he begged by the glorious confession he had made of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Sapricius's heart was more and more hardened, and now he would not so much as look on him. The soldiers laughed at Nicephorus, saying, "A greater fool than thee was never seen, in being so solicitous for a man's pardon who is upon the point of being executed." Being arrived at the place of execution, Nicephorus redoubled his humble entreaties and supplications, but all in vain, for Sapricius continued as obstinate as ever in refusing to forgive. The executioners said to Sapricius, "Kneel down, that we may cut off your head." Sapricius said, "Upon what account?" They answered, "Because you will not sacrifice to the gods, nor obey the emperor's orders, for the love of that man that is called Christ." The unfortunate Sapricius cried out, "Stop, my friends; do not put me to death: I will do what you desire: I am ready to sacrifice." Nicephorus, sensibly afflicted at his apostasy, cried aloud to him, "Brother, what are you doing? renounce not Jesus Christ, our good master. Forfeit not a crown you have already gained by tortures and sufferings." But Sapricius would give no manner of attention to what he said. Whereupon Nicephorus, with tears of bitter anguish for the fall of Sapricius, said to the executioners, "I am a Christian, and believe in Jesus Christ, whom this wretch has renounced; behold me here ready to die in his stead." All present were astonished at such an unexpected declaration. The officers of justice being under an uncertainty how to proceed, dispatched a lictor, or beadle, to the governor with this message: "Sapricius promiseth to sacrifice, but here is another desirous to die for the same Christ, saying, I am a Christian, and refuse to sacrifice to your gods, and comply with the edicts of the emperors." The governor, on hearing this, dictated the following sentence: "If this man persist in refusing to sacrifice to the immortal gods, let him die by the sword," which was accordingly put in execution. Thus Nicephorus received three immortal crowns—namely, of faith, humility, and charity, triumphs of which Sapricius had

made himself unworthy. The Greek and the Roman Martyrologies mention him on this day.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 9 :*

ST ANSBERT, Archbishop of Rouen, who left the Court of Clotaire III to enter a monastery : ST APOLLONIA, an aged virgin who suffered incredible insults and tortures before her martyrdom in 249, under the Emperor Philip at Alexandria : ST ATTRACTA or Tarahata, who made her religious vows under St Patrick : ST ERHARD, a Scotsman who preached the faith in Germany : ST NICEPHORUS : ST THELIAU, the courageous Bishop who succoured many when the yellow plague devastated Wales ; he died in 580 in a happy old age : TWENTY-SIX HOLY MARTYRS IN JAPAN, put to death at Negasaki, beatified in 1627 and canonized in 1862 ; these were three Jesuits, six Franciscans, and seventeen laymen of the Third Order of St Francis.

## FEBRUARY 10

### ST SCHOLASTICA, VIRGIN

(About the year 543)

[From St Gregory the Great, Dial. lib. ii. c. 33 and 34.]

THIS saint was sister to the great St Benedict. She consecrated herself to God from her earliest youth, as St Gregory testifies. Where her first monastery was situated is not mentioned ; but after her brother removed to Mount Cassino she chose her retreat at Plombariola, in that neighbourhood, where she founded and governed a nunnery about five miles distant to the south from St Benedict's monastery. St Bertharius, who was Abbot of Cassino three hundred years after, says that she instructed in virtue several of her own sex. And whereas St Gregory informs us that St Benedict governed nuns as well as monks, his sister must have been their abbess under his rule and direction. She visited her holy brother once a year, and as she was not allowed to enter his monastery, he went out with some of his monks to meet her at a house at some small distance. They spent these visits in the praises of God, and in conferring together on spiritual matters. St Gregory relates a remarkable circumstance of the last of these visits. Scholastica having passed the day as usual in singing psalms and pious discourse, they sat down in the evening to take their refectio. After it was over, Scholastica, perhaps foreknowing it would be their last interview in this world, or at least desirous of some further spiritual improvement, was very urgent with her brother to delay his return till the next day, that they might entertain themselves till morning upon the happiness of the other life. St Benedict, unwilling to transgress his rule, told her he could not pass a night out of his monastery, so desired her not to insist upon such a breach of monastic discipline. Scholastica finding him resolved on going home, laying her hands joined upon the table, and her head upon them, with many tears, begged of Almighty God to interpose in her behalf. Her prayer was scarce ended when there happened such a storm of rain, thunder, and lightning, that neither St

Benedict nor any of his companions could set a foot out of doors. He complained to his sister, saying, "God forgive you, sister; what have you done?" She answered, "I asked you a favour, and you refused it me; I asked it of Almighty God, and he has granted it me." St Benedict was therefore obliged to comply with her request, and they spent the night in conferences on pious subjects, chiefly on the felicity of the blessed, to which both most ardently aspired, and which she was shortly to enjoy. The next morning they parted, and three days after St Scholastica died in her solitude. St Benedict was then alone in contemplation on Mount Cassino, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he saw the soul of his sister ascending thither in the shape of a dove. Filled with joy at her happy passage, he gave thanks for it to God, and declared her death to his brethren, some of whom he sent to bring her corpse to his monastery, where he caused it to be laid in the tomb which he had prepared for himself. She must have died about the year 543.

Louis of Granada, treating on the perfection of the love of God, mentions the miraculous storm obtained by St Scholastica to show with what excess of goodness God is always ready to hear the petitions and desires of his servants. This pious soul must have received strong pledges and most sensible tokens of his love, seeing she depended on receiving so readily what she asked of him. No child could address himself with so great confidence to his most tender parent. The love which God bears us, and his readiness to succour and comfort us, if we humbly confess and lay before him our wants, infinitely surpasses all that can be found in creatures. Nor can we be surprised that he so easily heard the prayer of this holy virgin, since at the command of Joshua he stopped the heavens, God obeying the voice of man! He hears the most secret desires of those that fear and love him, and does their will: if he sometimes seems deaf to their cries, it is to grant their main desire by doing what is most expedient for them, as St Austin frequently observes. The short prayer by which St Scholastica gained this remarkable victory over her brother, who was one of the greatest saints on earth, was doubtless no more than a single act of her pure desires, which she continually turned toward, and fixed on her beloved. It was enough for her to cast her eyes interiorly upon him with whom she was closely and inseparably united in mind and affections, to move him so suddenly to change the course of the elements in order to satisfy her pious desire. By placing herself, as a docile scholar, continually at the feet of the Divine Majesty, who filled all the powers of her soul with the sweetness of his heavenly communications, she learned that sublime science of perfection in which she became a mistress to so many other chaste souls by this divine exercise. Her life in her retirement, to that happy moment which closed her mortal pilgrimage, was a

continued uniform contemplation, by which all her powers were united to and transformed into God.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 10 :*

ST ERLUPH, a native of Scotland who went to north-western Germany to preach Christ and was martyred at Eppokstorp in 830 : ST SCHOLASTICA : ST SOTERIS, virgin and martyr, whom St Ambrose calls the greatest honour of his family. Her face was buffeted as was that of her Divine Master and she was grievously tortured, " but without one sigh or one tear," ere her judge ordered her head to be struck off : and ST WILLIAM OF MALEVAL, who lived and died (in 1157) a hermit and a true penitent after his licentious youth in the army ; founder of the Gulielmites, an order of Hermits long since extinct.

## FEBRUARY 11

### SAINTS SATURNINUS, DATIVUS, AND MANY OTHER MARTYRS OF AFRICA

(A.D. 304)

[From their contemporary acts, received as authentic by St Austin, Brevic. Coll. die 3, c. 17. The Donatists added a preface to them and a few glosses, in which condition they are published by Baluzius, t. ii. But Bollandus and Ruinart give them genuine.]

THE emperor Diocletian had commanded all Christians under pain of death to deliver up the holy scriptures to be burnt. This persecution had raged a whole year in Africa ; some had betrayed the cause of religion, but many more had defended it with their blood when these saints were apprehended. Abitina, a city of the proconsular province of Africa, was the theatre of their triumph. Saturninus, priest of that city, celebrated the divine mysteries on a Sunday, in the house of Octavius Felix. The magistrates having notice of it, came with a troop of soldiers, and seized forty-nine persons of both sexes. The principal among them were the priest Saturninus, with his four children, viz., young Saturninus and Felix, both lectors, Mary, who had consecrated her virginity to God, and Hilarianus, yet a child ; also Dativus, a noble senator, Ampelius, Rogatianus, and Victoria. Dativus, the ornament of the senate of Abitina, whom God destined to be one of the principal senators of heaven, marched at the head of this holy troop. Saturninus walked by his side, surrounded by his illustrious family. The others followed in silence. Being brought before the magistrates, they confessed Jesus Christ so resolutely that their very judges applauded their courage, which repaired the infamous sacrilege committed there a little before by Fundanus, the Bishop of Abitina, who in that same place had given up to the magistrates the sacred books to be burnt ; but a violent shower suddenly falling, put out the fire, and a prodigious hail ravaged the whole country. The confessors were shackled and sent to Carthage, the residence of the proconsul. They rejoiced to see themselves in chains for Christ, and sung hymns and canticles during their whole journey to Carthage, praising and thanking God. The proconsul, Anulinus, addressing himself first to Dativus, asked him of what

condition he was, and if he had assisted at the collect or assembly of the Christians. He answered that he was a Christian, and had been present at it. The proconsul bid him discover who presided, and in whose house those religious assemblies were held: but without waiting for his answer, commanded him to be put on the rack and torn with iron hooks, to oblige him to a discovery. They underwent severally the tortures of the rack, iron hooks, and cudgels.

The weaker sex fought no less gloriously, particularly the illustrious Victoria; who, being converted to Christ in her tender years, had signified a desire of leading a single life, which her pagan parents would not agree to, having promised her in marriage to a rich young nobleman. Victoria, on the day appointed for the wedding, full of confidence in the protection of Him whom she had chosen for the only spouse of her soul, leaped out of a window, and was miraculously preserved from hurt. Having made her escape, she took shelter in a church; after which she consecrated her virginity to God, with the ceremonies then used on such occasions at Carthage, in Italy, Gaul, and all over the West.<sup>1</sup> To the crown of virginity she earnestly desired to join that of martyrdom. The proconsul, on account of her quality, and for the sake of her brother, a pagan, tried all means to prevail with her to renounce her faith. He inquired what was her religion. Her answer was, "I am a Christian." Her brother Fortunatianus undertook her defence, and endeavoured to prove her lunatic. The saint, fearing his plea might be the means of her losing the crown of martyrdom, made it appear by her wise confutations of it that she was in her perfect senses, and protested that she had not been brought over to Christianity against her will. The proconsul asked her if she would return with her brother? She said, "She could not, being a Christian, and acknowledging none as brethren but those who kept the law of God." The proconsul then laid aside the quality of judge to become her humble suppliant, and entreated her not to throw away her life. But she rejected his entreaties with disdain, and said to him: "I have already told you my mind; I am a Christian, and I assisted at the collect." Anulinus, provoked at this constancy, reassumed his rage, and ordered her to prison with the rest, to wait the sentence of death, which he not long after pronounced upon them all.

The proconsul would yet try to gain Hilarianus, Saturninus's youngest son, not doubting to vanquish one of his tender age. But the child showed more contempt than fear of the tyrant's threats, and answered his interrogatories: "I am a Christian; I have been at the collect, and it was of my own voluntary choice, without any compulsion." The proconsul

<sup>1</sup> These were, by laying her head on the altar to offer it to God, and all her life after wearing her hair long, as the ancient Nazarenes did: (Act. p. 417. St Optatus, l. vi. S. Ambr. ad Virg. c. 8.) Whereas the ceremony of this consecration in Egypt and Syria was for the virgin to cut off her hair in the presence of a priest. (Buiteau, Hist. Mon. p. 170.)

threatened him with those little punishments with which children are accustomed to be chastised, little knowing that God himself fights in his martyrs. The child only laughed at him. The governor then said to him: "I will cut off your nose and ears." Hilarianus replied: "You may do it; but I am a Christian." The proconsul, dissembling his confusion, ordered him to prison. Upon which the child said, "Lord, I give thee thanks." These martyrs ended their lives under the hardships of their confinement, and are honoured in the ancient calendar of Carthage, and the Roman Martyrology, on the 11th of February, though only two (of the name of Felix) died on that day of their wounds.

The example of these martyrs condemns the sloth with which many Christians in this age celebrate the Lord's Day. When the judge asked them, how they durst presume to hold their assembly against the imperial orders, they always repeated, even on the rack, "The obligation of the Sunday is indispensable. It is not lawful for us to omit the duty of that day. We celebrated it as well as we could. We never passed a Sunday without meeting at our assembly. We will keep the commandments of God at the expense of our lives." No dangers nor torments could deter them from this duty. A rare example of fervour in keeping that holy precept, from which too many, upon lame pretences, seek to excuse themselves. As the Jew was known by the religious observance of the Sabbath, so is the true Christian by his manner of celebrating the Sunday. And as our law is more holy and more perfect than the Jewish, so must be our manner of sanctifying the Lord's Day. This is the proof of our religion, and of our piety towards God. The primitive Christians kept this day in the most holy manner, assembling to public prayer, in dens and caves, knowing that, "without this religious observance, a man cannot be a Christian," to use the expression of an ancient father.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 11 :*

THE BLESSED BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS, to whom Our Lady appeared at Lourdes : SAINTS SATURNINUS, DAVITUS, and many other martyrs of Africa : THE SEVEN FOUNDERS OF THE SERVITE ORDER : ST SEVERINUS, Abbot of Agaunum ; born when the Arian heresy was raging, he forsook the world early and many miracles attested his sanctity during his life : and ST THEODORA, Empress, whom the Greeks revere as a saint. Patient and mild under the anger of her husband ; at his death, as Regent for her son, Michael III, she put an end to the Iconoclast heresy. She spent the last years of her life in a monastery.

FEBRUARY 12

## ST BENEDICT OF ANIAN, ABBOT

(A.D. 821)

[From his life, wrote with great piety, gravity, and erudition by St Ardo Smaragdus, his disciple, to whom he committed the government of his Monastery of Anian, when he was called by the emperor near the court. Ardo died March the 7th, in 843, and is honoured at Anian among the saints. He is not to be confounded with Smaragdus, Abbot in the diocese of Verdun, author of a commentary on the rule of St Bennet. This excellent life is published by Dom Menard, at the head of St Bennet's Concordia Regularum; by Henschenius, Feb. 12, and by Dom Mabillon, Acta SS. Ben. vol. v. pp. 191, 217. See Helyot, Hist. des Ord. Relig. t. v. p. 139. See also Bulteau, Hist. de l'Ord de St Benoit, lib. v. c. 2, p. 342; Eckart de Reb. Fran. t. ii. pp. 117, 163.]

HE was son of Aigulf, Count or Governor of Languedoc, and served King Pepin and his son Charlemagne in quality of cup-bearer, enjoying under them great honours and possessions. Grace made him sensible of the vanity of all perishable goods, and at twenty years of age he took a resolution of seeking the kingdom with his whole heart. From that time he led a most mortified life in the court itself for three years, eating very sparingly and of the coarsest fare, allowing himself very little sleep, and mortifying all his senses. In 774, having narrowly escaped being drowned in the Tesin, near Pavia, in endeavouring to save his brother, he made a vow to quit the world entirely. Returning to Languedoc, he was confirmed in his resolution by the pious advice of a hermit of great merit and virtue, called Widmar; and under a pretext of going to the court at Aix-la-Chapelle, he went to the Abbey of St Seine, five leagues from Dijon, and having sent back all his attendants, became a monk there. He spent two years and a half in wonderful abstinence, treating his body as a furious wild beast, to which he would show no other mercy than barely not to kill it. He took no other sustenance on any account but bread and water; and when overcome with weariness, he allowed himself nothing softer than the bare ground whereon to take a short rest, thus making even his repose a continuation of penance. He frequently passed the whole night in prayer, and stood barefoot on the ground in the sharpest cold. He studied to make himself contemptible by all manner of humiliations, and received all insults with joy, so perfectly was he dead to himself. God bestowed on him an extraordinary spirit of compunction, and the gift of tears, with an infused knowledge of spiritual things to an eminent degree. Not content to fulfil the rule of St Benedict in its full rigour, he practised all the severest observances prescribed by the rules of St Pachomius and St Basil. Being made cellarist, he was very solicitous to provide for others whatever St Benedict's rule allowed, and had a particular care of the poor and of the guests.

His brethren, upon the abbot's death, were disposed to choose our saint, but he being unwilling to accept of the charge on account of their known aversion to a reformation, left them, and returned to his own

country, Languedoc, in 780, where he built a small hermitage near a chapel of St Saturninus, on the brook Anian, near the river Eraud, upon his own estate. Here he lived some years in extreme poverty, praying continually that God would teach him to do his will, and make him faithfully correspond with his eternal designs. Some solitaries, and with them the holy man Widmar, put themselves under his direction, though he long excused himself. They earned their livelihood by their labour, and lived on bread and water, except on Sunday and solemn festivals, on which they added a little wine and milk when it was given in alms. The holy superior did not exempt himself from working with the rest in the fields, either carrying wood or ploughing; and sometimes he copied good books. The number of his disciples increasing, he quitted the valley and built a monastery in a more spacious place, in that neighbourhood. He showed his love of poverty by his rigorous practice of it; for he long used wooden, and afterwards glass or pewter, chalices at the altar; and if any presents of silk or ornaments were made him, he gave them to other churches. However, he some time after changed his way of thinking with respect to the church; built a cloister and a stately church, adorned with marble pillars, furnished it with silver chalices and rich ornaments, and bought a great number of books. He had in a short time three hundred religious under his direction, and also exercised a general inspection over all the monasteries of Provence, Languedoc, and Gascony, which respected him as their common parent and master. At last he remitted something in the austerities of the reformation he had introduced among them.

Benedict was become the oracle of the whole kingdom, and he established his reformation in many great monasteries with little or no opposition. His most illustrious colony was the Monastery of Gellone, founded in 804 by William, Duke of Aquitain, who retired into it himself, whence it was called St Guillem du Desert. By the councils held under Charlemagne, in 813, and by the Capitulars of that prince, published the same year, it was ordained that the canons should live according to the canons and laws of the church, and the monks according to the rule of St Bennet, by which regulation an uniformity was introduced in the monastic order in the West. The emperor Louis Debonnair, who succeeded his father on the 28th of January, 814, committed to the saint the inspection of all the abbeys in his kingdom. To have him nearer his own person, the emperor obliged him to live in the Abbey of Marmunster, in Alsace; and as this was still too remote, desirous of his constant assistance in his councils, he built the monastery of Inde, two leagues from Aix-le-Chapelle, the residence of the emperor and court. Notwithstanding St Benedict's constant abode in this monastery, he had still a hand in restoring monastic discipline throughout France and Germany, as he also was the chief instrument in drawing up the canons for the reformation of prebendaries



and monks in the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle in 817, and presided in the assembly of abbots the same year, to enforce restoration of discipline. His statutes were adopted by the order, and annexed to the rule of St Benedict, the founder. He wrote, whilst a private monk at Seine, the Code of Rules, being a collection of all the monastic regulations which he found extant; as also a book of homilies for the use of monks, collected, according to the custom of that age, from the works of the fathers; likewise a Penitential, printed in the additions to the Capitulars. In his Concord of Rules he gives that of St Bennet, with those of other patriarchs of the monastic order, to show their uniformity in the exercises which they prescribe. This great restorer of the monastic order in the West, worn out at length with mortification and fatigues, suffered much from continual sickness the latter years of his life. He died at Inde, with extraordinary tranquillity and cheerfulness, on the 11th of February, 821, being then about seventy-one years of age, and was buried in the same monastery, since called St Cornelius's, the church being dedicated to that holy pope and martyr. At Anian his festival is kept on the 11th, but by most other Martyrologies on the 12th of February, the day of his burial. His relics remain in the Monastery of St Cornelius, or of Inde, in the duchy of Cleves, and have been honoured with miracles.

St Bennet, by the earnestness with which he set himself to study the spirit of his holy rule and state, gave a proof of the ardour with which he aspired to Christian perfection. The experienced masters of a spiritual life, and the holy legislators of monastic institutes, have in view the great principles of an interior life, which the gospel lays down; for in the exercises which they prescribe powerful means are offered by which a soul may learn perfectly to die to herself, and be united in all her powers to God. This dying to and profound annihilation of ourselves is of such importance that so long as a soul remains in this state, though all the devils in hell were leagued together, they can never hurt her. All their efforts will only make her sink more deeply in this feeling knowledge of herself, in which she finds her strength, her repose, and her joy, because by it she is prepared to receive the divine grace; and if self-love be destroyed, the devil can have no power over us, for he never makes any successful attacks upon us but by the secret intelligence which he holds with this domestic enemy.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 12 :*

ST ANTHONY CAULEAS, Patriarch of Constantinople, died on this date, 896 : ST BENEDICT OF ANIAN : ST EULALIA, virgin and martyr, who suffered on the rack before she was crucified, under Dacian : BLESSED JAMES FENN, 1584, BLESSED JOHN NUTTER, VENERABLE GEORGE HAYDOCK, VENERABLE JOHN MUNDY, and BLESSED THOMAS HEMERFORD, five English priests and martyrs under Elizabeth in 1583 and 1584 : ST MELETIUS, Patriarch of Antioch, styled a martyr by St John Damascene, because of his three banishments and his sufferings and trials while combating the heresies of his time. This saint ordained St John Chrysostom.

FEBRUARY 13

## ST CATHARINE DE RICCI, V., O. S. D.

(A.D. 1589)

[See her life, written by F. Seraphin Razzi, a Dominican friar, who knew her, and was fifty-eight years old when she died. The nuns of her monastery gave an ample testimony that this account was conformable partly to what they knew of her, and partly to MS. memorials left by her confessor and others concerning her. Whence F. Echard calls this life a work accurately wrote. It was printed in quarto at Lucca, in 1594. Her life was again compiled by F. Philip Guidi, confessor to the saint and to the Duchess of Urbino, and printed at Florence, in two vols. quarto, in 1622. FF. Michael Pio and John Lopez, of the same order, have given abstracts of her life. See likewise Bened. XIV de Can. Serv. Dei. t. v. inter Act. Can. 5. SS. Append.]

THE Ricci are an ancient family, which still subsists in a flourishing condition in Tuscany. Peter de Ricci, the father of our saint, was married to Catharine Bonza, a lady of suitable birth. The saint was born at Florence in 1522, and called at her baptism Alexandrina, but she took the name of Catharine at her religious profession. Having lost her mother in her infancy, she was formed to virtue by a very pious godmother, and whenever she was missing she was always to be found on her knees in some secret part of the house. When she was between six and seven years old, her father placed her in the Convent of Monticelli, near the gates of Florence, where her aunt, Louisa de Ricci, was a nun. This place was to her a paradise: at a distance from the noise and tumult of the world, she served God without impediment or distraction. After some years her father took her home. She continued her usual exercises in the world as much as she was able; but the interruptions and dissipation, inseparable from her station, gave her so much uneasiness that, with the consent of her father, which she obtained, though with great difficulty, in the year 1535, the fourteenth of her age, she received the religious veil in the convent of Dominicanesses at Prat, in Tuscany, to which her uncle, F. Timothy de Ricci, was director. God, in the merciful design to make her the spouse of his crucified Son, and to imprint in her soul dispositions conformable to his, was pleased to exercise her patience by rigorous trials. For two years she suffered inexpressible pains under a complication of violent distempers, which remedies themselves served only to increase. These sufferings she sanctified by the interior dispositions with which she bore them, and which she nourished principally by assiduous meditation on the passion of Christ, in which she found an incredible relish and a solid comfort and joy. After the recovery of her health, which seemed miraculous, she studied more perfectly to die to her senses, and to advance in a penitential life and spirit, in which God had begun to conduct her, by practising the greatest austerities which were compatible with the obedience she had professed; she fasted two or three days a week on bread and water, and sometimes passed the whole day without taking any

nourishment, and chastised her body with disciplines and a sharp iron chain which she wore next her skin. Her obedience, humility, and meekness were still more admirable than her spirit of penance. The least shadow of distinction or commendation gave her inexpressible uneasiness and confusion, and she would have rejoiced to be able to lie hid in the centre of the earth, in order to be entirely unknown to and blotted out of the hearts of all mankind, such were the sentiments of annihilation and contempt of herself in which she constantly lived. It was by profound humility and perfect interior self-denial that she learned to vanquish in her heart the sentiments or life of the first Adam—that is, of corruption, sin, and inordinate self-love. But this victory over herself, and purgation of her affections, was completed by a perfect spirit of prayer; for by the union of her soul with God, and the establishment of the absolute reign of his love in her heart, she was dead to and disengaged from all earthly things. And in one act of sublime prayer she advanced more than by a hundred exterior practices in the purity and ardour of her desire to do constantly what was most agreeable to God, to lose no occasion of practising every heroic virtue, and of vigorously resisting all that was evil. Prayer, holy meditation, and contemplation were the means by which God imprinted in her soul sublime ideas of his heavenly truths, the strongest and most tender sentiments of all virtues, and the most burning desire to give all to God, with an incredible relish and affection for suffering contempt and poverty for Christ. What she chiefly laboured to obtain, by meditating on his life and sufferings, and what she most earnestly asked of him, was that he would be pleased, in his mercy, to purge her affections of all poison of the inordinate love of creatures, and engrave in her his most holy and divine image, both exterior and interior—that is to say, both in her conversation and her affections, that so she might be animated, and might think, speak, and act by his most Holy Spirit. The saint was chosen, very young, first, mistress of the novices, then sub-prioress, and, in the twenty-fifth year of her age, was appointed perpetual prioress. The reputation of her extraordinary sanctity and prudence drew her many visits from a great number of bishops, princes, and cardinals—among others, of Cervini, Alexander of Medicis, and Aldobrandini, who all three were afterwards raised to St Peter's chair, under the names of Marcellus II, Clement VIII, and Leo XI. Something like what St Austin relates of St John of Egypt happened to St Philip Neri and St Catherine of Ricci. For having some time entertained together a commerce of letters, to satisfy their mutual desire of seeing each other, whilst he was detained at Rome she appeared to him in a vision, and they conversed together a considerable time, each doubtless being in a rapture. This St Philip Neri, though most circumspect in giving credit to or in publishing visions, declared, saying that Catherine de Ricci, whilst living, had

appeared to him in vision, as his disciple Galloni assures us in his life.<sup>1</sup> And the continuators of Bollandus inform us that this was confirmed by the oaths of five witnesses.<sup>2</sup> Bacci, in his life of St Philip, mentions the same thing, and Pope Gregory XV, in his bull for the canonization of St Philip Neri, affirms that whilst this saint lived at Rome he conversed a considerable time with Catharine of Ricci, a nun, who was then at Prat, in Tuscany.<sup>3</sup> Most wonderful were the raptures of St Catharine in meditating on the passion of Christ, which was her daily exercise, but to which she totally devoted herself every week from Thursday noon to three o'clock in the afternoon on Friday. After a long illness she passed from this mortal life to everlasting bliss and the possession of the object of all her desires, on the feast of the Purification of our Lady, on the 2nd of February, in 1589, the sixty-seventh year of her age. The ceremony of her beatification was performed by Clement XII in 1732, and that of her canonization by Benedict XIV in 1746. Her festival is deferred to the 13th of February.

As a life altogether taken up in action and business, without frequent prayer and pious meditation, alienates a soul from God and virtue, and weds her totally to the world, so a life spent wholly in contemplation, without any mixture of action, is chimerical, and the attempt dangerous. The art of true devotion consists very much in a familiar and easy habit of accompanying exterior actions and business with a pious attention to the Divine Presence, frequent secret aspirations, and a constant union of the soul with God. This St Catharine of Ricci practised at her work, in the exterior duties of her house and office, in her attendance on the sick (which was her favourite employment, and which she usually performed on her knees), and in the tender care of the poor over the whole country. But this hindered not the exercises of contemplation, which were her most assiduous employment. Hence retirement and silence were her delight, in order to entertain herself with the Creator of all things, and by devout meditation, kindling in her soul the fire of heavenly love, she was never able to satiate the ardour of her desire in adoring and praising the immense greatness and goodness of God.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 13 :*

ST CATHARINE DE RICCI : ST GREGORY II, Pope, " skilled in the knowledge of the Scriptures " : ST LICINIUS, Bishop of Angers : ST KENTIGERN : ST MARTINIANUS, hermit at Athens, who, after a life of heroic resistance to temptation, died happily, aged fifty, about the year 400 : ST MODOMNOC, or Dominick, of Ossory, said to have been of the noble race of the O'Neils : ST POLYEUCTUS, martyr about the year 250 : BLESSED ROGER, a Cistercian Abbot, died about 1175 : and ST STEPHEN, Abbot, a model of austerity and penance about whom, in his last agony, angels were seen, " waiting to conduct his happy soul to bliss."

<sup>1</sup> Gallon. apud Contin. Bolland. Acta Sanctorum, Maii, t. vi. p. 503, col. 2, n. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 504, col. 2.

<sup>3</sup> In Bullar. Cherubini, t. iv. p. 8.

FEBRUARY 14

## SAINT VALENTINE, PRIEST AND MARTYR (THIRD AGE)

[His acts are commended by Henschenius, but objected to by Tillemont, &c. Here is given only an abridgment of the principal circumstances, from Tillem. t. iv. p. 678.]

VALENTINE was a holy priest in Rome, who, with St Marius and his family, assisted the martyrs in the persecution under Claudius II. He was apprehended, and sent by the emperor to the prefect of Rome; who, on finding all his promises to make him renounce his faith ineffectual, commanded him to be beaten with clubs, and afterwards to be beheaded, which was executed on the 14th of February, about the year 270. Pope Julius I is said to have built a church near Ponte Mole to his memory, which for a long time gave name to the gate, now called Porta del Popolo, formerly Porta Valentini. The greatest part of his relics are now in the church of St Praxedes. His name is celebrated as that of an illustrious martyr in the sacramentary of St Gregory, the Roman missal of Thomasius, in the calendar of F. Fronto, and that of Allatius, in Bede, Usuard, Ado, Notker, and all other martyrologies on this day. To abolish the heathens' lewd superstitious custom of boys drawing the names of girls, in honour of their goddess Februa Juno, on the 15th of this month, several zealous pastors substituted the names of saints in billets given on this day. See January 29, on St Francis de Sales.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 14 :*

St ABRAAMES, Bishop of Carres, a holy solitary who, after winning many of the persecuting heathens to Christ, died in 422 : St AUXENTIUS, hermit ; in his youth one of the equestrian guards of Theodosius the Younger, noted for his habit of prayer before he left the world : St CONRAN, Bishop of Orkney ; the twenty-six isles so called once contained many monasteries. St GILBERT of Sempringham, founder of the Gilbertines. This was the only purely English Order and is now extinct. St Gilbert was the friend of St Thomas of Canterbury and was brought up under his care. St MARO, Abbot, a solitary who lived on a mountain in Syria, in the open air ; ordained a priest in 405 : BLESSED THOMAS PLUMTREE, LUKE KIRBY, RICHARD KIRKMAN, and RICHARD THIRKILL, priests, hanged at Tyburn under Elizabeth : and St VALENTINE.

FEBRUARY 15

## SAINTS FAUSTINUS AND JOVITA, MARTYRS (A.D. 121)

FAUSTINUS and JOVITA were brothers, nobly born, and zealous professors of the Christian religion, which they preached without fear in their city of Brescia, whilst the bishop of that place lay concealed during the persecution. The acts of their martyrdom seeming of doubtful authority, all we can affirm with certainty of them is, that their remarkable zeal excited the fury of the heathens against them, and procured them a glorious death for their faith at Brescia in Lombardy, under the emperor Adrian,

Julian, a heathen lord, apprehended them; and the emperor himself passing through Brescia, when neither threats nor torments could shake their constancy, commanded them to be beheaded. They seem to have suffered about the year 121.<sup>1</sup> The city of Brescia honours them as its chief patrons, and possesses their relics. A very ancient church in that city bears their name, and all martyrologies mention them.

The spirit of Christ is a spirit of martyrdom, at least of mortification and penance. It is always the spirit of the cross. The remains of the old man, of sin and of death, must be extinguished before one can be made heavenly by putting on affections which are divine. What mortifies the senses and the flesh gives life to the spirit, and what weakens and subdues the body strengthens the soul. Hence the divine love infuses a spirit of mortification, patience, obedience, humility, and meekness, with a love of sufferings and contempt, in which consists the sweetness of the cross. The more we share in the suffering life of Christ, the greater share we inherit in his spirit and in the fruit of his death. To souls mortified to their senses and disengaged from earthly things, God gives frequent foretastes of the sweetness of eternal life, and the most ardent desires of possessing him in his glory. This is the spirit of martyrdom, which entitles a Christian to a happy resurrection, and to the bliss of the life to come.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 15:*

ST FAUSTINUS and ST JOVITA: BLESSED JOHN BAPTIST MACHADO, S.J., one of the heroic martyrs in Japan, in 1617: ST SIGEFRIDE or SIGFRID, Bishop, Apostle of Sweden. He was a priest of York, sent to preach the Gospel in that northern land, the first-fruits of his apostolate being twelve of the principal men of the territory of Smaland. Their names were long to be read on the fountain by which they were honoured in Wexiow.

## FEBRUARY 16

### ST ONESIMUS, DISCIPLE OF ST PAUL

HE was a Phrygian by birth, slave to Philemon, a person of note in the city of Colossæ, converted to the faith by St Paul. Having robbed his master, and being obliged to fly, he providentially met with St Paul, then a prisoner for the faith at Rome, who there converted and baptized him, and sent him with his canonical letter of recommendation to Philemon, by whom he was pardoned, set at liberty, and sent back to his spiritual father, whom he afterwards faithfully served. That apostle made him, with Tychicus, the bearer of his epistle to the Colossians,<sup>2</sup> and afterwards, as St Jerom<sup>3</sup> and other fathers witness, a preacher of the gospel, and a bishop. The Greeks say he was crowned with martyrdom under Domitian, in the year 95, and keep his festival on the 15th. Bede, Ado, Usuard,

<sup>1</sup> See Tillemont, t. ii. p. 249; Pagi, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Colos. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 62, c. 2.

the Roman and other Latin martyrologists mention him on the 16th of February.<sup>1</sup>

Baronius and some others confound him with St Onesimus, the third bishop of Ephesus after St Timothy, who was succeeded first by John, then by Caius. This Onesimus showed great respect and charity to St Ignatius when on his journey to Rome, in 107, and is highly commended by him.<sup>2</sup>

When a sinner, by the light and power of an extraordinary grace, is snatched like a firebrand out of the fire, and rescued from the gates of hell, we cannot wonder if he is swallowed up by the deepest and most lively sense of his own guilt and of the divine mercy; if such a one loves much, because much has been forgiven him; if he endeavours to repair his past crimes by heroic acts of penance and all virtues, and if he makes haste to redeem his lost time by a zeal and vigilance hard to be imitated by others. Hence we read of the "first love of the church of Ephesus"<sup>3</sup> as more perfect. The ardour of the compunction and love of a true penitent is compared to the unparalleled "love of Judah in the day of her espousal."<sup>4</sup> This ardour is not to be understood as a passing sally of the purest passions, as a short-lived fit of fervour or desire of perfection, as a transient taste or sudden transport of the soul: it must be sincere and constant. With what excess of goodness does God communicate himself to souls which thus open themselves to him! With what caresses does he often visit them! With what a profusion of graces does he enrich and strengthen them! It often happens that, in the beginning, God, either to allure the frailty of a new convert, or to fortify his resolution against hazardous trials, favours him with more than usual communications of the sweetness of his love, and ravishes him by some glances, as it were, of the beatific vision. His tenderness was not less when, for their spiritual advancement, their exercise in heroic virtues, and the increase of their victories and glory, he conducted them through severe trials. On the other side, with what fidelity and ardour did these holy penitents improve themselves daily in divine love and all virtues! Alas! our coldness and insensibility, since our pretended conversion from the world and sin, is a far greater subject of amazement than the extraordinary fervour of the saints in the divine service.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 16 :*

SAINTS ELIAS, JEREMY, ISAIAS, SAMUEL and DANIEL, five brave Egyptians martyred, with other steadfast souls, including St PAMPHILUS and St PORPHERIUS, his servant, a very heroic youth, at Cæsaria in Palestine, 1309. ST GREGORY X, Pope and Confessor, distinguished in youth for virtue and for progress in the study of canon law; "ever watchful over his own soul in the midst of public affairs." ST JULIANA, martyred in Nicomedia, much honoured in the Low Countries: ST ONESIMUS; and ST TANCO or Tatta, Bishop and martyr, a native of Scotland called by grace to preach Christ to the German people as so many Scots appear to have been.

<sup>1</sup> Tillem. t. i. p. 294, and note 10, on St Paul.

<sup>2</sup> Apoc. xi. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. ad Ephes.

<sup>4</sup> Jerem. xi. 2.

FEBRUARY 17

ST FLAVIAN, MARTYR, ARCHBISHOP OF  
CONSTANTINOPLE

(A.D. 449)

[From the councils, and historians Cedrenus, Evagrius, Theophanes, &c. See Baronius, Henschenius, t. iii. Feb. p. 71. Fleury, lib. xxvii., xxviii. Quesnel, in his edition of the works of St Leo, t. ii. diss. 1; and F. Cacciari, t. iii. Exercit. in opera St Leonis, Romæ, an. 1755. Dissert. 4, de Eutychniana Hær. lib. i. c. 2, p. 322; c. 8, p. 383; c. 9, p. 393; c. 11, p. 432.]

ST FLAVIAN was a priest of distinguished merit, and treasurer of the church of Constantinople, when he succeeded St Proclus in the archiepiscopal dignity in 447. The eunuch Chrysaphius, chamberlain to the emperor Theodosius the Younger, and a particular favourite, suggested to his master, a weak prince, to require of him a present, out of gratitude to the emperor for his promotion. The holy bishop sent him some blessed bread, according to the custom of the church at that time, as a benediction and symbol of communion. Chrysaphius let him know that it was a present of a very different kind that was expected from him. St Flavian, an enemy to simony, answered resolutely that the revenues and treasure of the church were designed for other uses, namely, the honour of God and the relief of his poor. The eunuch, highly provoked at the bishop's refusal, from that moment resolved to contrive his ruin. Wherefore, with a view to his expulsion, he persuaded the emperor, by the means of his wife Eudoxia, to order the bishop to make Pulcheria, sister to Theodosius, a deaconess of his church. The saint's refusal was a second offence in the eyes of the sycophants of the court. The next year Chrysaphius was still more grievously offended with our saint for his condemning the errors of his kinsman Eutyches, abbot of a monastery of three hundred monks, near the city, who had acquired a reputation for virtue, but in effect was no better than an ignorant, proud, and obstinate man. His intemperate zeal against Nestorius for asserting two distinct persons in Christ threw him into the opposite error, that of denying two distinct natures after the incarnation.

In a council, held by St Flavian in 448, Eutyches was accused of this error by Eusebius of Dorylæum, his former friend, and it was there condemned as heretical, and the author was cited to appear to give an account of his faith. On the day appointed in the last summons he appeared before the council, but attended by two of the principal officers of the court, and a troop of the imperial guards. Being admitted and interrogated on the point in question, that is, his faith concerning the incarnation; he declared that he acknowledged indeed two natures before the union, but after it only one. To all reasonings and authority produced against his tenet, his reply was that he did not come thither to dispute, but to satisfy the assembly what his faith was. The council, upon this,



anathematized and deposed him, and St Flavian pronounced the sentence, which was subscribed by thirty-two bishops and twenty-three abbots, of which last eighteen were priests. Eutyches said privately to his guards that he appealed to the bishops of Rome, Egypt, and Jerusalem; and in a letter he wrote to St Leo, to complain of his usage in the council, he endeavoured to impose on the pope. But his holiness being informed of the state of the affair by St Flavian, wrote to him an ample declaration of the orthodox faith upon the point, which was afterwards read, and inserted in the acts of the council of Chalcedon, in which the errors of Eutyches were solemnly condemned. Chrysaphius, however, had interest enough with the weak emperor to obtain an order for a re-examination of the cause between St Flavian and Eutyches in another council. This met in April 449, consisting of about thirty bishops, one-third whereof had assisted at the late council. St Flavian being looked on as a party, Thalassius, Bishop of Cæsarea, presided in his room. After the strictest scrutiny into every particular, the impiety of Eutyches and the justice of our saint's proceedings clearly appeared. St Flavian presented to the emperor a profession of his faith, wherein he condemned the errors of both Eutyches and Nestorius, his adversaries pretending that he favoured the latter.

Chrysaphius, though baffled in his attempts, was still bent on the ruin of the holy bishop, and employed all his craft and power to save Eutyches and destroy Flavian. With this view he wrote to Dioscorus, a man of a violent temper, who had succeeded St Cyril in the patriarchal see of Alexandria, promising him his friendship and favour in all his designs if he would undertake the defence of the deposed abbot against Flavian and Eusebius. Dioscorus came into his measures; and, by their joint interest with the empress Eudoxia, glad of an opportunity to mortify Pulcheria, who had a high esteem for our saint, they prevailed with the emperor to order a council to be called at Ephesus, to determine the dispute. Dioscorus was invited by the emperor to come and preside in it, accompanied with ten metropolitans and other bishops, together with the archimandrite, or abbot Barsumas, a man strongly attached to Eutyches and Dioscorus. The like directions were sent to the other patriarchs. St Leo, who was invited, though late, sent legates to act in his name, Julius, Bishop of Puteoli, Renatus, a priest, who died on the road, Hilarius, a deacon, and Dulcitius, a notary. He sent by them a learned letter to St Flavian, in which he taxes the ignorance of Eutyches in the holy scriptures, and explains the Catholic doctrine against that heresiarch, which he also did by other letters.

The false council of Ephesus, for the violences therein used commonly called the Latrocinale, was opened on the 8th of August, in 449, and consisted of one hundred and thirty bishops, or their deputies, from Egypt

and the East. Eutyches was there, and two officers from the emperor with a great number of soldiers. Every thing was carried on, by violence and open faction, in favour of Eutyches, by those officers and bishops who had espoused his party and formed a cabal. The pope's legates were never suffered to read his letters to the council. The final result of the proceedings was to pronounce sentence of deposition against St Flavian and Eusebius. The pope's legates protested against the sentence. Hilarius, the deacon, cried out aloud, "*contradicitur*," opposition is made; which Latin word was inserted in the Greek acts of the synod. And Dioscorus no sooner began to read the sentence but he was interrupted by several of the bishops, who, prostrating themselves before him, besought him, in the most submissive terms, to proceed no further in so unwarrantable an affair. Upon this he starts up and calls aloud for the imperial commissioners, Elpidius and Eulogius, who, without more ado, ordered the church doors to be set open; upon which Proclus, the proconsul of Asia, entered surrounded with a band of soldiers, and followed by a confused multitude, with chains, clubs, and swords. This struck such a terror into the whole assembly that when the bishops were required by Dioscorus and his creatures to subscribe, few or none had the courage to withstand his threats, the pope's legates excepted, who protested aloud against these violent proceedings—one of whom was imprisoned; the other, Hilarius, got off with much difficulty, and came safe to Rome. St Flavian, on hearing the sentence read by Dioscorus, appealed from him to the holy see, and delivered his acts of appeal in writing to the pope's legates, then present. This so provoked Dioscorus<sup>1</sup> that, together with Barsumas and others of their party,<sup>2</sup> after throwing the holy bishop on the ground, they so kicked and bruised him that he died within a few days, in 449, not at Ephesus, as some have said by mistake, but in his exile at Epipus, two days' journey from that city, situated near Sardes in Lydia, as Marcellinus testifies in his chronicle.

The council being over, Dioscorus, with two of his Egyptian bishops, had the insolence to excommunicate St Leo. But violence and injustice did not triumph long. For the emperor's eyes being opened on his sister Pulcheria's return to court, whom the ambition of Chrysaphius had found means to remove in the beginning of these disturbances, the eunuch was disgraced and soon after put to death; and the empress Eudoxia obliged to retire to Jerusalem. The next year the emperor died, as Cedrenus says, penitent; and Pulcheria, ascending the throne in 450, ordered St Flavian's body to be brought with great honour to Constantinople, and there magnificently interred among his predecessors in that see. St Leo had, upon the first news of these proceedings, wrote to him to comfort him, as also to Theodosius, Pulcheria, and the clergy of Con-

<sup>1</sup> Evag. lib. xi. c. 11.<sup>2</sup> Conc. Calced. act. 4.

stantinople in his defence. The general council of Chalcedon declared him a saint and martyr, and paid great honours to his memory, in 451. The same council honourably restored Eusebius of Dorylæum to his see. Pope Hilarius, who had been St Leo's legate at Ephesus, had so great a veneration for the saint that he caused the martyrdom to be represented in Mosaic work, in the church which he built in honour of the holy cross. The wicked Dioscorus was condemned by the council of Chalcedon in 451, and died obstinate and impenitent in the Eutychian heresy, and his other crimes, in his banishment at Gangres, in 454.

It was the glory of St Flavian to die a martyr of the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. This is the fundamental article of the Christian religion, and, above all other mysteries, challenges our most profound homages and constant devotion. In it hath God displayed, in the most incomprehensible manner, the astonishing immensity of his power, mercy, wisdom, and love, the contemplation of which will be the sweet occupation of angels and saints to all eternity. The servants of God on earth find their greatest delight in meditating on this great mystery, and in profound adoration and transports of love, honouring, praising, and glorifying their divine Saviour, and studying to put on his spirit by the constant union in mind and heart, or of their thoughts and affections, with him. But as the incarnation is the mystery of the unfathomed humility of a God to heal the wound of our pride, it is only by humility, and the annihilation of creatures in our hearts, that we can be disposed to contemplate or honour it with fruit. The dreadful fall and impenitence of Eutyches, after he had renounced the world with a view to give himself to God, were owing to the fatal sin of a secret pride.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 17 :*

THE FLIGHT OF OUR LORD INTO EGYPT : ST FINNAN, a monk of Iona who succeeded St Aidan as Bishop of Northumbria, died 661, honoured in Scotland : ST FINTAN, Abbot of Chuainednech. Many saints of this name are honoured. He is said to have raised one of his disciples from the dead by his prayers : ST FLAVIAN : ST LOMAN or Luman, a disciple if not a sister's son of St Patrick's, first Bishop of Trim, in Meath : ST SILVIN of Auchy, Bishop and Confessor : ST THEODULAS and ST JULIAN, martyred at Cæsarea in Palestine. Theodorus was an old man who had admired the courage of the five Egyptians martyred in this place. Julian was a catechumen arrested while venerating the bodies of those just executed. His cheerful courage in the face of death amazed his executioners.

## FEBRUARY 18

### ST SIMEON, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM, M.

(A.D. 116)

[From Euseb. lib. iii. c. 32 ; Tillem. t. i. p. 186, and t. ii. Le Quien, Oriens Christ. t. iii. p. 140.]

ST SIMEON was the son of Cleophàs, otherwise called Alpheus, brother to St Joseph, and of Mary, sister of the Blessed Virgin. He was, therefore, nephew both to St Joseph and to the Blessed Virgin, and cousin-german to

Christ. Simeon and Simon are the same name, and this saint is, according to the best interpreters of the holy scripture, the Simon mentioned,<sup>1</sup> who was brother to St James the Lesser, and St Jude, apostles, and to Joseph or José. He was eight or nine years older than our Saviour. We cannot doubt but he was an early follower of Christ, as his father and mother and three brothers were, and an exception to that of St John,<sup>2</sup> that our Lord's relations did not believe in him. Nor does St Luke<sup>3</sup> leave us any room to doubt but that he received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost with the Blessed Virgin and the apostles; for he mentions present St James and St Jude, and the brothers of our Lord. St Epiphanius relates<sup>4</sup> that when the Jews massacred St James the Lesser, his brother Simeon reproached them for their atrocious cruelty. St James, Bishop of Jerusalem, being put to death in the year 62, twenty-nine years after our Saviour's resurrection, the apostles and disciples met at Jerusalem to appoint him a successor. They unanimously chose St Simeon, who had probably before assisted his brother in the government of that church.

In the year 66, in which SS. Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome, the civil war began in Judea, by the seditions of the Jews against the Romans. The Christians in Jerusalem were warned by God of the impending destruction of that city, and by a divine revelation<sup>5</sup> commanded to leave it, as Lot was rescued out of Sodom. They therefore departed out of it the same year, before Vespasian, Nero's general, and afterwards emperor, entered Judea, and retired beyond Jordan to a small city called Pella, having St Simeon at their head. After the taking and burning of Jerusalem, they returned thither again, and settled themselves amidst its ruins, till Adrian afterwards entirely razed it. St Epiphanius<sup>6</sup> and Eusebius<sup>7</sup> assure us that the church here flourished extremely, and that multitudes of Jews were converted by the great number of prodigies and miracles wrought in it.

St Simeon, amidst the consolations of the Holy Ghost, and the great progress of the church, had the affliction to see two heresies arise within its bosom, namely, those of the Nazareans and the Ebionites; the first seeds of which, according to St Epiphanius, appeared at Pella. The Nazareans were a sect of men between Jews and Christians, but abhorred by both. They allowed Christ to be the greatest of the prophets, but said he was a mere man, whose natural parents were Joseph and Mary: they joined all the ceremonies of the old law with the new, and observed both the Jewish Sabbath and the Sunday. Ebion added other errors to these, which Cerenthus had also espoused, and taught many superstitions, permitted divorces, and allowed of the most infamous abominations. He began to preach at Cocabe, a village beyond Jordan, where he dwelt;

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 55.<sup>2</sup> Hær. 78, c. 14.<sup>3</sup> L. de Pond. et Mensur. c. 15.<sup>4</sup> John vii. 5.<sup>5</sup> Eus. lib. iii. c. 5; Epiph. hær. 29, c. 7, hær. 30, c. 2.<sup>6</sup> Demonst. lib. iii. c. 5.<sup>7</sup> Acts i. 14.

but he afterwards travelled into Asia, and thence to Rome. The authority of St Simeon kept the heretics in some awe during his life, which was the longest upon earth of any of our Lord's disciples. But, as Eusebius says, he was no sooner dead than a deluge of execrable heresies broke out of hell upon the church, which durst not openly appear during his life.

Vespasian and Domitian had commanded all to be put to death who were of the race of David. St Simeon had escaped their searches; but Trajan having given the same order, certain heretics and Jews accused him, as being both of the race of David and a Christian, to Atticus, the Roman governor in Palestine. The holy bishop was condemned by him to be crucified: who, after having undergone the usual tortures during several days, which, though one hundred and twenty years old, he suffered with so much patience that he drew on him an universal admiration, and that of Atticus in particular, he died in 107, according to Eusebius in his chronicle, but in 116 according to Dodwell, Bishop Loyde, and F. Pagi. He must have governed the church of Jerusalem about forty-three years.

The eminent saints among the primitive disciples of Jesus Christ were entirely animated by his spirit, and being dead to the world and themselves, they appeared like angels among men. In the midst of human applause they remained perfectly humbled in the centre of their own nothing: when loaded with reproaches and contempt, and persecuted with all the rage that malice could inspire, they were raised above all these things so as to stand fearless amidst racks and executioners, inflexibly constant in their fidelity to God, before tyrants; invincible under torments, and superior to them almost as if they had been impassible. Their resolution never failed them, their fervour seemed never slackened. Such wonderful men wrought continual miracles in converting souls to God. We bear the name of Christians, and wear the habit of saints; but are full of the spirit of worldlings, and our actions are infected with its poison. We secretly seek ourselves, even when we flatter ourselves that God is our only aim, and whilst we undertake to convert the world, we suffer it to pervert us. When shall we begin to study to crucify our passions and die to ourselves, that we may lay a solid foundation of true virtue and establish its reign in our hearts?

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 18:*

ST COLMAN, Bishop and Confessor, honoured in Ireland: BLESSED FRANCIS REGIS CLET, 1748-1820, martyred in China: ST LEO and ST PAREGORIUS. The latter having shed his blood for Christ, his friend Leo was told in a vision that he too should be a martyr. His face was "comely and smiling after his terrible death." ST SIMEON.

FEBRUARY 19

ST BARBATUS, OR BARBAS, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF  
BENEVENTO

(A.D. 682)

[From his two authentic lives in Bollandus, t. iii. Febr. p. 139. See Ughelli, Italia Sacra, t. viii. p. 13.]

ST BARBATUS was born in the territory of Benevento, in Italy, toward the end of the pontificate of St Gregory the Great, in the beginning of the seventh century. His parents gave him a Christian education, and Barbatus in his youth laid the foundation of that eminent sanctity which recommends him to our veneration. Devout meditation on the holy scriptures was his chief entertainment; and the innocence, simplicity, and purity of his manners, and extraordinary progress in all virtues, qualified him for the service of the altar, to which he was assumed by taking holy orders as soon as the canons of the church would allow it. He was immediately employed by his bishop in preaching, for which he had an extraordinary talent; and, after some time, made curate of St Basil's, in Morcona, a town near Benevento. His parishioners were steeled in their irregularities, and averse from whatever looked like establishing order and discipline amongst them. As they desired only to slumber on in their sins, they could not bear the remonstrances of their pastor, who endeavoured to awake them to a sense of their miseries, and to sincere repentance: they treated him as a disturber of their peace, and persecuted him with the utmost violence. Finding their malice conquered by his patience and humility, and his character shining still more bright, they had recourse to slanders, in which, such was their virulence and success, that he was obliged to withdraw his charitable endeavours amongst them. By these fiery trials, God purified his heart from all earthly attachments, and perfectly crucified it to the world. Barbatus returned to Benevento, where he was received with joy by those who were acquainted with his innocence and sanctity. The seed of Christianity had been first sown at Benevento by St Potin, who is said to have been sent thither by St Peter, and is looked upon as the first bishop of this see. We have no names of his successors till St Januarius, by whom this church was exceedingly increased, and who was honoured with the crown of martyrdom in 305. Totila, the Goth, laid the city of Benevento in ruins in 545. When St Barbatus entered upon his ministry in that city, the Christians themselves retained many idolatrous superstitions, which even their duke, or prince Romuald, authorized by his example, though son of Grimoald, king of the Lombards, who had edified all Italy by his conversion. They expressed a religious veneration to a golden viper, and prostrated themselves before it: they paid also a superstitious

honour to a tree, on which they hung the skin of a wild beast, and these ceremonies were closed by public games, in which the skin served for a mark at which bowmen shot arrows over their shoulder. St Barbatus preached zealously against these abuses, and laboured long to no purpose: yet desisted not, but joined his exhortations with fervent prayer and rigorous fasting, for the conversion of this unhappy people. At length he roused their attention by foretelling the distress of their city, and the calamities which it was to suffer from the army of the emperor Constans, who, landing soon after in Italy, laid siege to Benevento. In their extreme distress, and still more grievous alarms and fears, they listened to the holy preacher, and, entering into themselves, renounced their errors and idolatrous practices. Hereupon St Barbatus gave them the comfortable assurance that the siege should be raised and the emperor worsted, which happened as he had foretold. Upon their repentance, the saint with his own hand cut down the tree which was the object of their superstition, and afterward melted down the golden viper which they adored, of which he made a chalice for the use of the altar. Ildebrand, Bishop of Benevento, dying during the siege, after the public tranquillity was restored St Barbatus was consecrated bishop on the 10th of March, 663; for this see was only raised to the archiepiscopal dignity by Pope John XIII about the year 965. Barbatus, being invested with the episcopal character, pursued and completed the good work which he had so happily begun, and destroyed every trace or the least remains of superstition in the prince's closet, and in the whole state. In the year 680 he assisted in a council held by Pope Agatho at Rome, and the year following in the sixth general council held at Constantinople against the Monothelites. He did not long survive this great assembly, for he died on the 29th of February, 682, being about seventy years old, almost nineteen of which he had spent in the episcopal chair. He is named in the Roman Martyrology, and honoured at Benevento among the chief patrons of that city.

Amongst the pretended conversions which sickness daily produces, very few bear the characters of sincerity, as appears by those who, after their recovery, live on in their former lukewarmness and disorders.<sup>1</sup> St Austin, in a sermon which he made upon the news that Rome had been sacked by the barbarians, relates<sup>2</sup> that not long before, at Constantinople, upon the appearance of an unusual meteor, and a rumour of a pretended prediction that the city would be destroyed by fire from heaven, the inhabitants were seized with a panic fear, all began to do penance like Ninive, and fled, with the emperor at their head, to a great distance from the city. After the term appointed for its pretended destruc-

<sup>1</sup> "The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;  
The devil was well, the devil no monk was he."

<sup>2</sup> S. Aug. Serm. de Excidio Urbis, c. 6, t. vi. p. 627, ed. Ben.

tion was elapsed, they sent scouts to the city which they had left quite empty, and, hearing that it was still standing, returned to it, and with their fears forgot their repentance and all their good resolutions. To prevent the danger of penitents imposing upon themselves by superficial conversions, St Barbatus took all necessary precautions to improve their first dispositions to a sincere and perfect change of heart, and to cut off and remove all dangerous occasions of temptations.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 19 :*

ST BARBATUS, a zealous preacher who joined prayer and fasting to his exhortations, chief patron of the city of which he was bishop: ST MANSUETUS, Bishop of Milan: ST GABINUS, priest and martyr: and ST GEORGES, Bishop of Lodavia.

FEBRUARY 20

SS. TYRANNIO, BISHOP OF TYRE, ZENOBIUS AND OTHERS,  
MARTYRS IN PHŒNICIA, &c.

(A.D. 304-310)

[From Eusebius, Hist. lib. viii. c. 7, 13, 25; St Jerom in Chron. Euseb.]

EUSEBIUS, the parent of church history, and an eye-witness of what he relates concerning these martyrs, gives the following account of them:— 'Several Christians of Egypt, whereof some had settled in Palestine, others at Tyre, gave astonishing proofs of their patience and constancy in the faith. After innumerable stripes and blows, which they cheerfully underwent, they were exposed to wild beasts, such as leopards, wild bears, boars, and bulls. I myself was present when these savage creatures, accustomed to human blood, being let out upon them, instead of devouring them or tearing them to pieces, as it was natural to expect, stood off, refusing even to touch or approach them, at the same time that they fell foul on their keepers and others that came in their way. The soldiers of Christ were the only persons they refused, though these martyrs, pursuant to the order given them, tossed about their arms, which was thought a ready way to provoke the beasts and stir them up against them. Sometimes, indeed, they were perceived to rush towards them with their usual impetuosity, but, withheld by a divine power, they suddenly withdrew; and this many times, to the great admiration of all present. The first having done no execution, others were a second and a third time let out upon them, but in vain; the martyrs standing all the while unshaken, though many of them very young. Among them was a youth not yet twenty, who had his eyes lifted up to heaven, and his arms extended in the form of a cross, not in the least daunted, nor trembling, nor shifting his place, while the bears and leopards, with their jaws wide open, threatening immediate death, seemed just ready to tear him to pieces; but, by a miracle,



not being suffered to touch him, they speedily withdrew. Others were exposed to a furious bull, which had already gored and tossed into the air several infidels who had ventured too near, and left them half dead: only the martyrs he could not approach; he stopped, and stood scraping the dust with his feet, and though he seemed to endeavour it with his utmost might, butting with his horns on every side, and pawing the ground with his feet, being also urged on by red-hot iron goads, it was all to no purpose. After repeated trials of this kind with other wild beasts, with as little success as the former, the saints were slain by the sword, and their bodies cast into the sea. Others who refused to sacrifice were beaten to death, or burned, or executed divers other ways." This happened in the year 304, under Veturius, a Roman general, in the reign of Diocletian.

The church on this day commemorates the other holy martyrs, whose crown was deferred till 310. The principal of these was St Tyrannio, Bishop of Tyre, who had been present at the glorious triumph of the former, and encouraged them in their conflict. He had not the comfort to follow them till six years after, when, being conducted from Tyre to Antioch, with St Zenobius, a holy priest and physician of Sidon, after many torments he was thrown into the sea, or rather into the river Orontes, upon which Antioch stands, at twelve miles distance from the sea. Zenobius expired on the rack, whilst his sides and body were furrowed and laid open with iron hooks and nails. St Sylvanus, Bishop of Emisa, in Phœnicia, was, some time after, under Maximinus, devoured by wild beasts in the midst of his own city, with two companions, after having governed that church forty years. Peleus and Nilus, two other Egyptian priests, in Palestine, were consumed by fire with some others. St Sylvanus, Bishop of Gaza, was condemned to the copper mines of Phœnon, near Petra, in Arabia, and afterward beheaded there with thirty-nine others.

St Tyrannio is commemorated on the 20th of February in the Roman Martyrology, with those who suffered under Veturius, at Tyre, in 304; St Zenobius, the priest and physician of Sidon, who suffered with him at Antioch, on the 29th of October; St Sylvanus of Emisa, to whom the Menology gives many companions, on the 6th of February; St Sylvanus of Gaza, on the 29th of May.

The love of Christ triumphed in the hearts of so many glorious martyrs, upon racks, in the midst of boiling furnaces, or flames, and in the claws or teeth of furious wild beasts. How many, inflamed with his love, have forsaken all things to follow him, despising honours, riches, pleasures, and the endearments of worldly friends, to take up their crosses, and walk with constancy in the narrow paths of a most austere penitential life! We also pretend to love him: but what effect has this love upon us?

what fruit does it produce in our lives? If we examine our own hearts, we shall be obliged to confess that we have great reason to fear that we deceive ourselves. Let it be our resolution, from this moment, to renounce the love of the world, and all self-love, to seek and obey him alone.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 20 :*

ST ELEUTHERIUS, Bishop of Tournay; born of a Christian family, converted by St Paul one hundred and fifty years earlier: ST EUCHERIUS, Bishop of Orleans: ST MILDRED, Abbess, a grand-daughter of King Penda; she, with two sisters and a brother, served God in the cloister and are honoured as saints: ST SADOH, Bishop of Seleucia, with CRESIPHON and one hundred and twenty-eight companion-martyrs. Threatened with death, they cried with one voice: "We shall not die but shall live for ever, with God and His Son, Jesus Christ." SAINTS TYRANNIO, ZENOBIUS and other martyrs: and ST ULRICK, a recluse in Dorsetshire, died 1154.

## FEBRUARY 21

### ST SEVERIANUS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF SCYTHOPOLIS

(A.D. 452 or 453)

[From the life of St Euthymius, written by Cyril the monk; a letter of the emperor Marcian; Evagrius, lib. ii. c. 5. Nicephorus, Calixt. lib. xv. c. 9, collected by Bollandus, p. 246.]

IN the reign of Marcian and St Pulcheria, the Council of Chalcedon which condemned the Eutychian heresy was received by St Euthymius, and by a great part of the monks of Palestine. But Theodosius, an ignorant Eutychian monk, and a man of a most tyrannical temper, under the protection of the empress Eudoxia, widow of Theodosius the Younger, who lived at Jerusalem, perverted many among the monks themselves, and having obliged Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, to withdraw, unjustly possessed himself of that important see, and in a cruel persecution which he raised, filled Jerusalem with blood, as the emperor Marcian assures us: then, at the head of a band of soldiers, he carried desolation over the country. Many, however, had the courage to stand their ground. No one resisted him with a greater zeal and resolution than Severianus, Bishop of Scythopolis, and his recompense was the crown of martyrdom; for the furious soldiers seized his person, dragged him out of the city, and massacred him in the latter part of the year 452, or in the beginning of the year 453. His name occurs in the Roman Martyrology, on the 21st of February.

Palestine, the country which for above one thousand four hundred years had been God's chosen inheritance under the old law, when other nations were covered with the abominations of idolatry, had been sanctified by the presence, labours, and sufferings of our divine Redeemer, and had given birth to his church, and to so many saints, became often the theatre of enormous scandals, and has now, for many ages, been enslaved to the most impious and gross superstition. So many flourishing churches in the East, which were planted by the labours of the chiefest among the apostles, watered with the blood of innumerable glorious martyrs, illustrated

with the bright light of the Ignatiuses, the Polycarps, the Basils, the Ephrems, and the Chrysostoms, blessed by the example and supported by the prayers of legions of eminent saints, are fallen a prey to almost universal vice and infidelity. With what floods of tears can we sufficiently bewail so grievous a misfortune, and implore the divine mercy in behalf of so many souls! How ought we to be alarmed at the consideration of so many dreadful examples of God's inscrutable judgments, and tremble for ourselves! "Let him who stands beware lest he fall. Hold fast what thou hast," says the oracle of the Holy Ghost to every one of us, "lest another bear away thy crown."

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 21 :*

St DANIEL, a priest, and St VERDA (in Chaldaic, "a Rose"), a virgin consecrated to God; they were first tortured and then martyred in Persia, 344: St Maruthas chronicles their triumph in a few words: St GERMAN, Abbot of Granfel, and St RANDAUT, martyred about 666: St MARGARET OF CORTONA, whose feast is celebrated on this date in the dioceses of England (see Feb. 22): BLESSED PEPIN of Landen, mayor of the palace to three kings; his two daughters became saints: and St SEVERIANUS.

## FEBRUARY 22

### ST MARGARET OF CORTONA, PENITENT

(A.D. 1297)

[From her life written by her confessor, in the *Acta Sanctorum*; by Bollandus, p. 298. Wadding, *Annal. FF. Minorum* ad an. 1297; and the *Lives of the SS. of Third Ord.* by Barb. t. i. p. 508.]

MARGARET was a native of Alviano, in Tuscany. The harshness of a step-mother, and her own indulged propension to vice, cast her headlong into the greatest disorders. The sight of the carcass of a man, half putrified, who had been her gallant, struck her with so great a fear of the divine judgments, and with so deep a sense of the treachery of this world, that she in a moment became a perfect penitent. The first thing she did was to throw herself at her father's feet, bathed in tears, to beg his pardon for her contempt of his authority and fatherly admonitions. She spent the days and nights in tears: and to repair the scandal she had given by her crimes, she went to the parish church of Alviano, with a rope about her neck, and there asked public pardon for them. After this she repaired to Cortona, and made her most penitent confession to a father of the order of St Francis, who admired the great sentiments of compunction with which she was filled, and prescribed her austerities and practices suitable to her fervour. Her conversion happened in the year 1274, the twenty-fifth of her age. She was assaulted by violent temptations of various kinds, but courageously overcame them, and after a trial of three years was admitted to her profession among the penitents of the third order of St Francis, in Cortona. The extraordinary austerities with which she punished her criminal flesh soon disfigured her body. To exterior mortification she joined all sorts of humiliations; and the confusion with which she was

covered at the sight of her own sins pushed her on continually to invent many extraordinary means of drawing upon herself all manner of confusion before men. This model of true penitents, after twenty-three years of severe penance, and twenty of them in the religious habit, being worn out by austerities, and consumed by the fire of divine love, died on the 22nd of February, in 1297. After the proof of many miracles, Leo X granted an office in her honour to the city of Cortona, which Urban VIII extended to the whole Franciscan Order in 1623; and she was canonized by Benedict XIII in 1728.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 22 :*

THE CHAIR OF ST PETER AT ANTIOCH : which see he is said to have founded and where he made a long stay : ST BARADAT, a solitary in the diocese of Cyr : THE BLESSED DIDACUS or Diogo CARHALVO, S.J., martyred in China, 1624 : ST MARGARET OF CORTONA, who spent her life doing penance for the sins of her youth : ST THELASSIUS and ST LIMNEUS, the former endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit and the latter famed for his marvellous cures of the sick, while he himself bore sharp pains without any alleviation.

## FEBRUARY 23

### BLESSED PETER DAMIAN, OR OF DAMIAN, CARDINAL, BISHOP OF OSTIA

(A.D. 1072)

[From his life by his disciple, John of Lodi, in Mabill. c. 6, Ben., and from his own writings. Fleury, b. lix. ii. 48, and Hist. des Ordres Relig. ; Ceillier, t. xx. p. 512 ; Henschenius ad Feb. 23, p. 406.]

PETER, surnamed of Damian, was born about the year 988 in Ravenna, of a good family, but reduced. He was the youngest of many children, and, losing his father and mother very young, was left in the hands of a brother who was married, in whose house he was treated more like a slave, or rather like a beast, than one so nearly related; and when grown up, he was sent to keep swine. He one day became master of a piece of money, which, instead of laying it out in something for his own use, he chose to bestow in alms on a priest, desiring him to offer up his prayers for his father's soul. He had another brother called Damian, who was arch-priest of Ravenna, and afterwards a monk; who, taking pity of him, had the charity to give him an education. Having found a father in this brother, he seems from him to have taken the surname of Damian, though he often styles himself the Sinner, out of humility. Those who call him De Honestis confound him with Peter of Ravenna, who was of the family of Honesti. Damian sent Peter to school, first at Faenza, afterwards at Parma, where he had Ivo for his master. By the means of good natural parts and close application, it was not long before he found himself in a capacity to teach others, which he did with great applause, and no less advantage by the profits which accrued to him from his professorship. To

arm himself against the allurements of pleasure and the artifices of the devil, he began to wear a rough hair shirt under his clothes, and to inure himself to fasting, watching, and prayer. In the night, if any temptation of concupiscence arose, he got out of bed and plunged himself into the cold river. After this he visited churches, reciting the psalter whilst he performed this devotion till the church office began. He not only gave much away in alms, but was seldom without some poor person at his table, and took a pleasure in serving such, or rather Jesus Christ in their persons, with his own hands. But thinking all this to be removing himself from the deadly poison of sin but by halves, he resolved entirely to leave the world and embrace a monastic life, and at a distance from his own country, for the sake of meeting with the fewer obstacles to his design. While his mind was full of these thoughts, two religious of the order of St Benedict belonging to Font-Avellano, a desert at the foot of the Apennine in Umbria, happened to call at the place of his abode; and being much edified at their disinterestedness, he took a resolution to embrace their institute, as he did soon after. This hermitage had been founded by blessed Ludolf about twenty years before St Peter came thither, and was then in the greatest repute. The hermits here remained two and two together in separate cells, occupied chiefly in prayer and reading. They lived on bread and water four days in the week: on Tuesdays and Thursdays they ate pulse and herbs, which every one dressed in his own cell: on their fast days all their bread was given them by weight. They never used any wine (the common drink of the country) except for mass, or in sickness: they went barefoot, used disciplines, made many genuflections, struck their breasts, stood with their arms stretched out in prayer, each according to his strength and devotion. After the night office they said the whole psalter before day. Peter watched long before the signal for matins, and after with the rest. These excessive watchings brought on him an insomnia, or wakefulness, which was cured with very great difficulty. But he learned from this to use more discretion. He gave a considerable time to sacred studies, and became as well versed in the scriptures and other sacred learning as he was before in profane literature.

His superior ordered him to make frequent exhortations to the religious, and as he had acquired a very great character for virtue and learning, Guy, Abbot of Pomposia, begged his superior to send him to instruct his monastery, which consisted of a hundred monks. Peter stayed there two years, preaching with great fruit, and was then called back by his abbot, and sent to perform the same function in the numerous abbey of St Vincent, near the mountain called Pietra Pertusa, or the Hollow Rock. His love for poverty made him abhor and be ashamed to put on a new habit, or any clothes which were not threadbare and most mean. His obedience was so perfect that the least word of any superior,

or signal given, according to the rule of the house, for the performance of any duty made him run that moment to discharge, with the utmost exactness, whatever was enjoined. Being recalled home some time after, and commanded by his abbot, with the unanimous consent of the hermitage, to take upon him the government of the desert after his death, Peter's extreme reluctance only obliged his superior to make greater use of his authority till he acquiesced. Wherefore, at his decease, in 1041, Peter took upon him the direction of that holy family, which he governed with the greatest reputation for wisdom and sanctity. He also founded five other numerous hermitages; in which he placed priors under his inspection. His principal care was to cherish in his disciples the spirit of solitude, charity, and humility. Among them many became great lights of the church. He was for twelve years much employed in the service of the church by many zealous bishops, and by four popes successively, namely, Gregory VI, Clement II, Leo IX, and Victor II. Their successor, Stephen IX, in 1057, prevailed with him to quit his desert, and made him Cardinal-bishop of Ostia. But such was his reluctance to the dignity that nothing less than the pope's threatening him with excommunication, and his commands, in virtue of obedience, could induce Peter to submit.

Stephen IX dying in 1058, Nicholas II was chosen pope, a man of deep penetration, of great virtue and learning, and very liberal in alms, as our saint testifies, who assisted him in obliging John, Bishop of Veletri, an anti-pope, set up by the capitaneos or magistrates of Rome, to quit his usurped dignity. Upon complaints of simony in the church of Milan, Nicholas II sent Peter thither as his legate, who chastised the guilty. Nicholas II dying, after having sat two years and six months, Alexander was chosen pope, in 1062. Peter strenuously supported him against the emperor, who set up an anti-pope, Cadolaus, Bishop of Parma, on whom the saint prevailed soon after to renounce his pretensions in a council held at Rome; and engaged Henry IV, King of Germany, who was afterwards emperor, to acquiesce in what had been done, though that prince, who in his infancy had succeeded his pious father Henry III, had sucked in very early the corrupt maxims of tyranny and irreligion. But virtue is amiable in the eyes of its very enemies, and often disarms them of their fury. St Peter had, with great importunity, solicited Nicholas II for leave to resign his bishopric, and return to his solitude; but could not obtain it. His successor, Alexander II, out of affection for the holy man, was prevailed upon to allow it, in 1062, but not without great difficulty, and the reserve of a power to employ him in church matters of importance as he might have occasion hereafter for his assistance. The saint from that time thought himself discharged, not only from the burden of his flock, but also from the quality of superior, with regard to the

several monasteries the general inspection of which he had formerly charged himself with, reducing himself to the condition of a simple monk.

In this retirement he edified the church by his penance and compunction, and laboured by his writings to enforce the observance of discipline and morality. His style is copious and vehement, and the strictness of his maxims appears in all his works, especially where he treats of the duties of clergymen and monks. He severely rebuked the Bishop of Florence for playing a game at chess.<sup>1</sup> That prelate acknowledged his amusement to be a faulty sloth in a man of his character, and received the saint's remonstrance with great mildness, and submitted to his injunction by way of penance, namely, to recite three times the psalter, to wash the feet of twelve poor men, and to give to each a piece of money. He shows those to be guilty of manifold simony who serve princes or flatter them for the sake of obtaining ecclesiastical preferments.<sup>2</sup> This saint recommended the use of disciplines whereby to subdue and punish the flesh, which was adopted as a compensation for long penitential fasts. Three thousand lashes, with the recital of thirty psalms, were a redemption of a canonical penance of one year's continuance. Sir Thomas More, St Francis of Sales, and others testify that such means of mortification are great helps to tame the flesh and inure it to the labours of penance; also to remove a hardness of heart and spiritual dryness, and to soften the soul into compunction. But all danger of abuses, excess, and singularity is to be shunned, and other ordinary bodily mortifications, as watching and fasting, are frequently more advisable. The holy man reconciled discords, settled the bounds of the jurisdiction of certain dioceses, and condemned and deposed in councils those who were convicted of simony. He notwithstanding tempered his severity with mildness and indulgence towards penitents where charity and prudence required such a condescension. Henry IV, King of Germany, at eighteen years of age, began to show the symptoms of a heart abandoned to impiety, infamous debauchery, treachery, and cruelty. He married, in 1066, Bertha, daughter to Otho, Marquess of Italy, but afterward, in 1069, sought a divorce by taking his oath that he had never been able to consummate his marriage. The Archbishop of Mentz had the weakness to be gained over by his artifices to favour his desires, in which view he assembled a council at Mentz. Pope Alexander II forbid him ever to consent to so enormous an injustice, and pitched upon Peter Damian for his legate to preside in that synod, being sensible that a person of the most inflexible virtue, prudence, and constancy was necessary for so important and difficult an affair, in which passion, power, and craft made use of every engine in opposition to the cause of God. The venerable legate met the king and bishops at Frankfort,

<sup>1</sup> Opusc. 20, c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Opusc. 22.

laid before them the orders and instructions of his holiness, and in his name conjured the king to pay a due regard to the law of God, the canons of the church, and his own reputation, and seriously reflect on the public scandal of so pernicious an example. The noblemen likewise all rose up and entreated his majesty never to stain his honour by so foul an action. The king, unable to resist so cogent an authority, dropped his project of a divorce; but, remaining the same man in his heart, continued to hate the queen more than ever.

St Peter hastened back to his desert of Font-Avellano. Whatever austerities he prescribed to others he was the first to practise himself, remitting nothing of them even in his old age. He lived shut up in his cell as in a prison, fasted every day, except festivals, and allowed himself no other subsistence than coarse bread, bran, herbs, and water, and this he never drank fresh, but what he had kept from the day before. He tortured his body with iron girdles and frequent disciplines, to render it more obedient to the spirit. He passed the three first days of every Lent and Advent without taking any kind of nourishment whatsoever; and often for forty days together lived only on raw herbs and fruits, or on pulse steeped in cold water, without touching so much as bread, or any thing which had passed the fire. A mat spread on the floor was his bed. He used to make wooden spoons, and such like useful mean things, to exercise himself at certain hours in manual labour. Henry, Archbishop of Ravenna, having been excommunicated for grievous enormities, St Peter was sent by Pope Alexander II, in quality of legate, to adjust the affairs of the church. When he arrived at Ravenna, in 1072, he found the unfortunate prelate just dead, but brought the accomplices of his crimes to a sense of their guilt, and imposed on them a suitable penance. This was his last undertaking for the church, God being pleased soon after to call him to eternal rest, and to the crown of his labours. Old age and the fatigues of his journey did not make him lay aside his accustomed mortifications, by which he consummated his holocaust. In his return towards Rome, he was stopped by a fever in the monastery of our Lady without the gates of Faenza, and died there on the eighth day of his sickness, whilst the monks were reciting matins round about him. He passed from that employment which had been the delight of his heart on earth to sing the same praises of God in eternal glory, on the 22nd of February, 1072, being fourscore and three years old. He is honoured as patron at Faenza and Font-Avellano on the 23rd of the same month.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 23 :*

ST BOISIL, Prior of Melross, who loved to read a seventh part of the Gospel of St John daily :  
 BD. DOSITHEUS, monk, converted by the sight of a picture representing hell : ST MILBURGE,  
 virgin, sister to St Mildred (seventh century) : BLESSED PETER DAMIAN : ST SERENUS, a  
 gardener, beheaded on this date in 327; he cultivated his garden with his hands and lived on  
 its fruit and herbs until called by grace to die for the faith.



FEBRUARY 24

## ST MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

[From Acts i. 21. See Tillemont, t. i. p. 406; Henschenius, p. 434.]

ST CLEMENT of Alexandria<sup>1</sup> assures us, from tradition, that this saint was one of the seventy-two disciples, which is confirmed by Eusebius<sup>2</sup> and St Jerom;<sup>3</sup> and we learn from the Acts of the Apostles<sup>4</sup> that he was a constant attendant on our Lord from the time of his baptism by St John to his ascension. St Peter having, in a general assembly of the faithful held soon after, declared from holy scripture the necessity of choosing a twelfth apostle in the room of Judas, two were unanimously pitched upon by the assembly as most worthy of the dignity—Joseph, called Barsabas, and, on account of his extraordinary piety, surnamed the Just, and Matthias. After devout prayer to God that he would direct them in their choice, they proceeded in it by way of lot, which falling by the divine direction on Matthias, he was accordingly associated with the eleven, and ranked among the apostles. When in deliberations each side appears equally good, or each candidate of equally approved merit, lots may be sometimes lawfully used; otherwise, to commit a thing of importance to such a chance, or to expect a miraculous direction of divine providence in it, would be a criminal superstition and a tempting of God, except he himself, by an evident revelation or inspiration, should appoint such a means for the manifestation of his will, promising his supernatural interposition in it, which was the case on this extraordinary occasion. The miraculous dreams or lots which we read of in the prophets must no ways authorize any rash superstitious use of such means in others who have not the like authority.

We justly admire the virtue of this holy assembly of saints. Here were no solicitations or intrigues. No one presented himself to the dignity. Ambition can find no place in a virtuous or humble heart. He who seeks a dignity either knows himself unqualified, and is on this account guilty of the most flagrant injustice with regard to the public, by desiring a charge to which he is no ways equal; or he thinks himself qualified for it, and this self-conceit and confidence in his own abilities renders him the most unworthy of all others. Such a disposition deprives a soul of the divine assistance, without which we can do nothing; for God withdraws his grace and refuses his blessing where self-sufficiency and pride have found any footing. It is something of a secret confidence in ourselves, and a presumption that we deserve the divine succour, which banishes him from us. This is true even in temporal undertakings, but much more so in the charge of souls, in which all success is more particularly

<sup>1</sup> Strom. lib. iv. p. 488.<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. c. 12.<sup>3</sup> In Catal.<sup>4</sup> C. i. 21.

the special work of the Holy Ghost, not the fruit of human industry. These two holy candidates were most worthy of the apostleship, because perfectly humble, and because they looked upon that dignity with trembling, though they considered its labours, dangers, and persecutions with holy joy, and with a burning zeal for the glory of God. No regard was had to worldly talents, none to flesh and blood. God was consulted by prayer, because no one is to be assumed to his ministry who is not called by him, and who does not enter it by the door,<sup>1</sup> and with the undoubted marks of his vocation. We Gentiles are called upon the disinherison of the Jews, and are ingrafted on their stock.<sup>2</sup> We ought therefore to learn to stand always in watchfulness and fear, or we shall be also cut off ourselves, to give place to others whom God will call in our room, and even compel to enter, rather than spare us. The number of his elect depends not on us. His infinite mercy has invited us without any merit on our side; but if we are ungrateful he can complete his heavenly city without us, and will certainly make our reprobation the most dreadful example of his justice to all eternity.

St Matthias received the Holy Ghost with the rest soon after his election; and after the dispersion of the disciples, applied himself with zeal to the functions of his apostleship in converting nations to the faith. He is recorded by St Clement of Alexandria<sup>3</sup> to have been remarkable for inculcating the necessity of the mortification of the flesh with regard to all its sensual and irregular desires, an important lesson he had received from Christ, and which he practised assiduously on his own flesh. The tradition of the Greeks in their menologies tells us that St Matthias planted the faith about Cappadocia and on the coasts of the Caspian Sea, residing chiefly near the port Issus. He must have undergone great hardships and labours amidst so savage a people. The same authors add that he received the crown of martyrdom in Colchis, which they call Ethopia. The Latins keep his festival on the 24th of February. Some portions of his relics are shown in the abbatical church of Triers, and in that of St Mary Major, in Rome, unless these latter belong to another Matthias, who was one of the first bishops of Jerusalem, on which see the Bollandists.

As the call of St Matthias, so is ours purely the work of God, and his most gratuitous favour and mercy. What thanks, what fidelity and love, do we not owe him for this inestimable grace! In what transports of love and gratitude ought we not, without intermission, to adore his infinite goodness to us, and beg that we may be always strengthened by his grace to advance continually in humility and his holy love, lest, by slackening our pace in his service, we fall from this state of happiness, forfeit this sublime grace, and perish with Judas. Happy would the church be if all converts were careful to maintain themselves in the same fervour in

<sup>1</sup> John x. i.<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 12.<sup>3</sup> Strom. lib. iii. 436.

which they returned to God; but by a neglect to watch over themselves, and to shun dangers, and by falling into sloth, they often relapse into a condition much worse than the former.

## ST ETHELBERT, C., FIRST CHRISTIAN KING AMONG THE ENGLISH

HE was King of Kent, the fifth descendant from Hengist, who first settled the English Saxons in Britain in 448, and the foundation of whose kingdom is dated in 455. Ethelbert married, in his father's lifetime, Bertha, the only daughter of Charibert, King of Paris, and cousin-german to Clotaire, King of Soissons, and Childebert, King of Austrasia, whose two sons, Theodobert and Theoderic, or Thierry reigned after his death, the one in Austrasia, the other in Burgundy. Ethelbert succeeded his father, Ermenric, in 560. The kingdom of Kent, having enjoyed a continued peace for about a hundred years, was arrived at a degree of power and riches which gave it a pre-eminence in the Saxon heptarchy in Britain, and so great a superiority and influence over the rest, that Ethelbert is said by Bede to have ruled as far as the Humber, and Ethelbert is often styled King of the English. His queen, Bertha, was a very zealous and pious Christian princess, and by the articles of her marriage had free liberty to exercise her religion. The merit of the queen in the great work of her husband's conversion is acknowledged by our historians, and she deserved by her piety and great zeal to be compared by St Gregory the Great to the celebrated St Helen.<sup>1</sup> Divine Providence, by these means, mercifully prepared the heart of a great king to entertain a favourable opinion of our holy religion when St Augustine landed in his dominions, to whose life the reader is referred for an account of this monarch's happy conversion to the faith. From that time he appeared quite changed into another man, it being for the remaining twenty years of his life his only ambition and endeavour to establish the perfect reign of Christ, both in his own soul and in the hearts of all his subjects. His ardour in the exercises of penance and devotion never suffered any abatement, this being a property of true virtue which is not to be acquired without much labour and pains, self-denial and watchfulness, resolution and constancy. Great were, doubtless, the difficulties and dangers which he had to encounter in subduing his passions and in vanquishing many obstacles which the world and devil failed not to raise; but these trials were infinitely subservient to his spiritual advancement, by rousing him continually to a greater vigilance and fervour, and by the many victories and the exercise of all heroic virtues of which they furnished the occasions. In the government

<sup>1</sup> St Greg. M. lib. ix. ep. 60.

of his kingdom his thoughts were altogether turned upon the means of best promoting the welfare of his people. He enacted most wholesome laws, which were held in high esteem in *succeeding ages in this island*; he abolished the worship of idols throughout his kingdom, and shut up their temples or turned them into churches. His royal palace at Canterbury he gave for the use of the archbishop St Austin; he founded in that city the cathedral called Christchurch, and built without the walls the abbey and church of SS. Peter and Paul, afterwards called St Austin's. The foundation of St Andrew's, at Rochester, St Paul's, at London, and many other churches, affords many standing proofs of his munificence to the church and the servants of God. He was instrumental in bringing over to the faith of Christ Sebert, King of the East Saxons, with his people, and Redwald, King of the East Angles, though the latter, afterwards relapsing, pretended to join the worship of idols with that of Christ. King Ethelbert, after having reigned fifty-six years, exchanged his temporal diadem for an eternal crown, in 616, and was buried in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul. His remains were afterwards deposited under the high altar in the same church, then called St Austin's. St Ethelbert is commemorated on this day in the British and Roman Martyrologies; he was vulgarly called by our ancestors St Albert, under which name he is titular saint of several churches in England—particularly of one in Norwich, which was built before the cathedral, an account of which is given by Blomfield, in his History of Norfolk, and the city of Norwich. Polydore Virgil tells us that a light was kept always burning before the tomb of St Ethelbert, and was sometimes an instrument of miracles, even to the days of Henry VIII. See Bede, *Hist. Angl. lib. i. c. 25, &c.*; Henschen. t. iii. Febr. p. 471.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 24 :*

ST ETHELBERT : ST MATTHIAS, Apostle : SAINTS MONTANUS, LUCIUS, FLAVIAN, JULIAN, VICTORICUS, PRIMOLUS, RHENUS, and DONATIAN, martyred at Carthage, 259 : ST LETHARD, Bishop of Senlis, who came to England as chaplain to Bertha, daughter of the King of the French, when she married Ethelbert : ST PRETEXTATUS or PRIX, Archbishop of Rouen, martyr : BLESSED ROBERT OF ARBRISSEL, Grand Vicar of the diocese of Rennes.

## FEBRUARY 25

### ST TARASIUS, CONFESSOR, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE

(A.D. 806)

[From his life, wrote by Ignatius, his disciple, afterwards Bishop of Nice, and from the church historians of his time. See Bollandus, t. v. p. 576; Fleury, b. xliv.]

TARASIUS was born about the middle of the eighth century. His parents were both of patrician families. His father, George, was a judge, in great esteem for his well-known justice, and his mother, Eucratia, no less

celebrated for her piety. She brought him up in the practice of the most eminent virtues. Above all things, she recommended to him to keep no company but that of the most virtuous. The young man, by his talents and virtue, gained the esteem of all, and was raised to the greatest honours of the empire, being made consul, and afterwards secretary of state to the Emperor Constantine and the Empress Irene, his mother. In the midst of the court, and in its highest honours, surrounded by all that could flatter pride or gratify sensuality, he led a life like that of a religious man.

Leo, the Isaurian, his son, Constantine Copronymus, and his grandson, Leo, surnamed Chazarus, three successive emperors, had established, with all their power, the heresy of the Iconoclasts, or image-breakers, in the East. The Empress Irene, wife to the last, was always privately a Catholic, though an artful, ambitious woman. Her husband dying miserably, in 780, after a five years' reign, and having left his son Constantine, but ten years old, under her guardianship, she so managed the nobility in her favour as to get the regency and whole government of the state into her hands, and put a stop to the persecution of the Catholics. Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople, the third of that name, had been raised to that dignity by the late emperor. Though, contrary to the dictates of his own conscience, he had conformed in some respects to the then reigning heresy; he had, however, several good qualities, and was not only singularly beloved by the people for his charity to the poor, but highly esteemed by the empress and the whole court for his great prudence. Finding himself indisposed, and being touched with remorse for his condescension to the Iconoclasts in the former reign, without communicating his design to any one, he quitted the patriarchal see and put on a religious habit in the Monastery of Florus, in Constantinople. The empress was no sooner informed of it, but taking with her the young emperor, went to the monastery to dissuade a person so useful to her from persisting in such a resolution, but all in vain, for the patriarch assured them, with tears and bitter lamentations, that, in order to repair the scandal he had given, he had taken an unalterable resolution to end his days in that monastery, so desired them to provide the church of Constantinople with a worthy pastor in his room. Being asked whom he thought equal to the charge, he immediately named Tarasius, and dying soon after this declaration, Tarasius was accordingly chosen patriarch by the unanimous consent of the court, clergy, and people. Tarasius finding it in vain to oppose his election, declared, however, that he thought he could not in conscience accept of the government of a see which had been cut off from the catholic communion but upon condition that a general council should be called to compose the disputes which divided the church at that time in relation to holy images. This being agreed to, he was solemnly declared patriarch,

and consecrated soon after, on Christmas-day. He was no sooner installed but he sent his synodal letters to Pope Adrian, to whom the empress also wrote in her own and her son's name on the subject of a general council, begging that he would either come in person, or at least send some venerable and learned men as his legates to Constantinople.

The legates of the pope and the oriental patriarchs being arrived, as also the bishops under their jurisdiction, the council was opened on the 1st of August in the Church of the Apostles, at Constantinople, in 786. But the assembly being disturbed by the violences of the Iconoclasts, and desired by the empress to break up and withdraw for the present, the council met again the year following in the Church of St Sophia, at Nice. The two legates from the pope are named first in the Acts, St Tarasius next, and after him the legates of the oriental patriarchs—namely, John, priest and monk, for the Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, and Thomas, priest and monk, for the Patriarch of Alexandria. The council consisted of three hundred and fifty bishops, besides many abbots and other holy priests and confessors, who having declared the sense of the present church in relation to the matter in debate, which was found to be the allowing to holy pictures and images a relative honour, the council was closed with the usual acclamations and prayers for the prosperity of the emperor and empress; after which synodal letters were sent to all the churches, and in particular to the pope, who approved the council.

The good patriarch, pursuant to the decrees of the synod, restored holy images throughout the extent of his jurisdiction. He also laboured zealously to abolish simony, and wrote a letter upon that subject to Pope Adrian, in which, by saying it was the glory of the Roman church to preserve the purity of the priesthood, he intimated that that church was free from this reproach. The life of this holy patriarch was a model of perfection to his clergy and people. His table had nothing of superfluity. He allowed himself very little time for sleep. Reading and prayer filled all his leisure hours. Loving humility in himself, he sought sweetly to induce all others to the love of that virtue. His charity and love for the poor seemed to surpass his other virtues. He often took the dishes of meat from his table to distribute among them with his own hands, and he assigned them a large fixed revenue; and that none might be overlooked, he visited all the houses and hospitals in Constantinople. His discourses were powerful exhortations to the universal mortification of the senses, and he was particularly severe against all theatrical entertainments. Some time after the emperor became enamoured of Theodota, a maid of honour to his wife, the Empress Mary, whom he had always hated; and forgetting what he owed to God, he was resolved to divorce her in 795, after seven years' cohabitation. He used all his efforts to gain the patriarch, and sent a principal officer to him for that purpose, accusing his wife of a plot

to poison him. St Tarasius answered the messenger, saying, "I know not how the emperor can bear the infamy of so scandalous an action in the sight of the universe, nor how he will be able to hinder or punish adulteries and debaucheries if he himself set such an example. Tell him that I will rather suffer death and all manner of torments than consent to his design." The emperor, hoping to prevail with him by flattery, sent for him to the palace, and said to him, I can conceal nothing from you, whom I regard as my father. No one can deny but I may divorce one who has attempted my life. She deserves death or perpetual penance." He then produced a vessel, as he pretended, full of the poison prepared for him. The patriarch, with good reason, judging the whole to be only an artful contrivance to impose upon him, answered that he was too well convinced that his passion for Theodota was at the bottom of all his complaints against the empress. He added that though she were guilty of the crime he laid to her charge, his second marriage during her life with any other would still be contrary to the law of God, and that he would draw upon himself the censures of the church by attempting it. Then the emperor turned the Empress Mary out of his palace, and obliged her to put on a religious veil. Tarasius persisting in his refusal to marry him to Theodota, the ceremony was performed by Joseph, treasurer of the church of Constantinople. This scandalous example was the occasion of several governors and other powerful men divorcing their wives or taking more than one at the same time, and gave great encouragement to public lewdness. SS. Plato and Theodorus separated themselves from the emperor's communion, to show their abhorrence of his crime. But Tarasius did not think it prudent to proceed to excommunication, as he had threatened, apprehensive that the violence of his temper, when further provoked, might carry him still greater lengths, and prompt him to re-establish the heresy which he had taken such effectual measures to suppress. Thus the patriarch, by his moderation, prevented the ruin of religion, but drew upon himself the emperor's resentment, who persecuted him many ways during the remainder of his reign. Not content to set spies and guards over him under the name of Syncelli, who watched all his actions and suffered no one to speak to him without their leave, he banished many of his domestics and relations. This confinement gave the saint the more leisure for contemplation, and he never ceased in it to recommend his flock to God. The ambitious Irene, finding that all her contrivances to render her son odious to his subjects had proved ineffectual to her design, which was to engross the whole power to herself, having gained over to her party the principal officers of the court and army, she made him prisoner, and caused his eyes to be plucked out: this was executed with so much violence that the unhappy prince died of it, in 797. After this she reigned alone five years,

during which she recalled all the banished, but at length met with the deserved reward of her ambition and cruelty from Nicephorus, a patrician, and the treasurer-general, who, in 802, usurped the empire, and having deposed her, banished her into the Isle of Lesbos, where she soon after died with grief.

St Tarasius, on the death of the late emperor, having interdicted and deposed the treasurer Joseph, who had married and crowned Theodota, St Plato and others who had censured his lenity became thoroughly reconciled to him. The saint, under his successor, Nicephorus, a patrician, persevered peaceably in his practices of penance, and in the functions of his pastoral charge. In his last sickness he still continued to offer daily the holy sacrifice so long as he was able to move. A little before his death he fell into a kind of trance, as the author of his life, who was an eye-witness, relates, wherein he was heard to dispute and argue with a number of accusers, very busy in sifting his whole life, and objecting all they could to it. But a great serenity succeeded, and the holy man gave up his soul to God in peace, on the 25th of February, in 806, having sat twenty-one years and two months. God honoured his memory with miracles, some of which are related by the author of his life. His festival began to be celebrated under his successor. The Latin and Greek churches both honour his memory on this day. Fourteen years after his decease, Leo the Armenian, the Iconoclast emperor, dreamt a little before his own death that he saw St Tarasius highly incensed against him, and heard him command one Michael to stab him. Leo, judging this Michael to be a monk in the saint's monastery, ordered him the next morning to be sought for, and even tortured some of the religious to oblige them to a discovery of the person; but it happened there was none of that name among them, and Leo was killed six days after by Michael Balbus.

The virtue of St Tarasius was truly great, because constant and crowned with perseverance, though exposed to continual dangers of illusion or seduction amidst the artifices of hypocrites and a wicked court. St Chrysostom observes<sup>1</sup> that the path of virtue is narrow, and lies between precipices, in which it is easier for the traveller to be seized with giddiness even near the end of his course, and fall. "Pirates wait for and principally attack ships when they are upon the return home laden with riches rather than empty vessels going out of the port. Just so the devil, when he sees that a soul has gathered great spiritual riches, by fasts, prayer, alms, chastity, and all other virtues, when he sees our vessel fraught with rich commodities, then he falls upon her, and seeks on all sides to break in. What exceedingly aggravates the evil is the extreme difficulty of ever rising again after such a fall. To err in the beginning may be in part a

<sup>1</sup> Chrysos. Hom. iii. ; de Ozia. t. vi. p. 14. ed. Ben.



want of experience, but to fall after a long course is mere negligence, and can deserve no excuse or pardon."

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 25 :*

ST CÆSARIUS, a physician, brother to St Gregory Nazianzen : ST TARASIVS : SAINTS VICTORINUS AND SIX COMPANIONS, martyrs ; they were seven citizens of Corinth : ST WALBERGE, Abbess, daughter to the holy king Richard ; she was educated and took the veil in the monastery of Winburn in Dorsetshire.

FEBRUARY 26

## ST ALEXANDER, CONFESSOR, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA

(A.D. 326)

[From Theodoret, St Athanasius, &c. See Hermant. Tillemont, t. vi. pp. 213, 240 ; Ceillier, t. iv.]

ST ALEXANDER succeeded St Achillas in the see of Alexandria in 313. He was a man of apostolic doctrine and life, mild, affable, exceedingly charitable to the poor, and full of faith, zeal, and fervour. He assumed to the sacred ministry chiefly those who had first sanctified themselves in holy solitude, and was happy in the choice of bishops throughout all Egypt. The devil, enraged to see the havoc made in his usurped empire over mankind by the disrepute idolatry was generally fallen into, used his utmost endeavours to repair the loss to his infernal kingdom by procuring the establishment of a most impious heresy. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was his principal instrument for that purpose. This heresiarch was well versed in profane literature, was a subtle dialectician, had an exterior show of virtue, and an insinuating behaviour ; but was a monster of pride, vain-glory, ambition, envy, and jealousy. He joined Meletius, the Bishop of Lycopolis, in the beginning of his schism against St Peter, our saint's predecessor, in 300 : but quitting that party after some time, St Peter was so well satisfied of the sincerity of his repentance that he ordained him deacon. Soon after Arius discovered his turbulent spirit, in accusing his archbishop and raising disturbances in favour of the Meletians. This obliged St Peter to excommunicate him, nor could he ever be induced to revoke that sentence. But his successor, St Achillas, upon his repentance, admitted him to his communion, ordained him priest, and made him curate of the church of Baucales, one of the quarters of Alexandria. Giving way to spite and envy on seeing St Alexander preferred before him to the see of Alexandria,<sup>1</sup> he became his mortal enemy : and as the saint's life and conduct were irreproachable, all his endeavours to oppose him were levelled at his doctrine, in opposition to which the heresiarch denied the divinity of Christ. This error he at first taught only in private ; but having, about the year 319, gained followers to support him, he boldly

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret, lib. i. c. 1 ; Socrates, lib. i. c. 5.

advanced his blasphemies in his sermons, affirming, with Ebion, Artemas, and Theodotus, that Christ was not truly God; adding, what no heretic had before asserted in such a manner, that the Son was a creature, and made out of nothing; that there was a time when he did not exist, and that he was capable of sinning, with other such impieties. Arius engaged in his errors two other curates of the city, a great many virgins, twelve deacons, seven priests, and two bishops.

One Colluthus, another curate of Alexandria, and many others, declaimed loudly against these blasphemies. The heretics were called Arians, and these called the Catholics Colluthians. St Alexander, who was one of the mildest of men, first made use of soft and gentle methods to recover Arius to the truth, and endeavoured to gain him by sweetness and exhortations. Several were offended at his lenity, and Colluthus carried his resentment so far as to commence a schism; but this was soon at an end, and the author of it returned to the Catholic communion. But St Alexander, finding Arius's party increase, and all his endeavours to reclaim him ineffectual, he summoned him to appear in an assembly of his clergy, where, being found obstinate and incorrigible, he was excommunicated together with his adherents. This sentence of excommunication the saint confirmed soon after, about the end of the year 320, in a council at Alexandria, at the head of near one hundred bishops, at which Arius was also present.

Alexander wrote to the Pope, St Sylvester, and, in a circular letter, to the other bishops of the church, giving them an account of Arius's heresy and condemnation. Arius, Eusebius, and many others, wrote to our saint, begging that he would take off his censures. The Emperor Constantine also exhorted him by letter to a reconciliation with Arius, and sent it by the great Osius to Alexandria, with express orders to procure information of the state of the affair. The deputy returned to the emperor better informed of the heresiarch's impiety and malice, and the zeal, virtue, and prudence of St Alexander: and having given him a just and faithful account of the matter, convinced him of the necessity of a general council as the only remedy adequate to the growing evil and capable of restoring peace to the church. St Alexander had already sent him the same advice in several letters. That prince, accordingly, by letters of respect, invited the bishops to Nice, in Bithynia, and defrayed their expenses. They assembled in the imperial palace of Nice on the 19th of June, in 325, being three hundred and eighteen in number, the most illustrious prelates of the church, among whom were many glorious confessors of the faith. The principal were our saint, St Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch, St Macarius of Jerusalem, Cecilian, Archbishop of Carthage, St Paphnutius, St Potamon, St Paul of Neocesarea, St James of Nisibis, &c. St Sylvester could not come in person by reason of his great age; but he sent his

legates, who presided in his name. The Emperor Constantine entered the council without guards, nor would he sit till he was desired by the bishops, says Eusebius.<sup>1</sup> Theodoret says<sup>2</sup> that he asked the bishops' leave before he would enter.

The blasphemies of Arius, who was himself present, were canvassed for several days. Marcellus of Ancyra, and St Athanasius, whom St Alexander had brought with him, and whom he treated with the greatest esteem, discovered all the impiety they contained, and confuted the Arians with invincible strength. The heretics, fearing the indignation of the council, used a great deal of dissimulation in admitting the Catholic terms. The fathers, to exclude all their subtleties, declared the Son consubstantial to the father, which they inserted in the profession of their faith, called the Nicene creed, which was drawn up by Osius, and to which all subscribed, except a small number of Arians. At first they were seventeen, but Eusebius of Cæsarea received the creed the day following, as did all the others, except five, namely, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nice, Maris of Chalcedon, Theonas and Secundus of Lybia, the two bishops who had first joined Arius. Arius, Theonas, and Secundus, with some Egyptian priests, were banished by the order of Constantine, and Illyricum was the place of their exile. The council received Meletius and his schismatical adherents upon their repentance; but they afterwards relapsed into their schism, and part of them joined the Arians. The council added twenty canons of discipline, and was closed about the 25th of August. Constantine gave all the prelates a magnificent entertainment, and dismissed them with great presents to their respective sees. St Alexander, after this triumph of the faith, returned to Alexandria; where, after having recommended St Athanasius for his successor, he died in 326, on the 26th of February, on which day he is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology.

A true disciple of Christ, by a sincere spirit of humility and distrust in himself, is, as it were, naturally inclined to submission to all authority appointed by God, in which he finds his peace, security, and joy. This happy disposition of his soul is his secure fence against the illusions of self-sufficiency and blind pride, which easily betrays men into the most fatal errors. On the contrary, pride is a spirit of revolt and independence: he who is possessed with this devil is fond of his own conceits, self-confident, and obstinate. This is the true portraiture of Arius and other heresiarchs and firebrands of the universe. Can we sufficiently detest jealousy and pride, the fatal source of so great evils! Do we not discover, by fatal symptoms, that we ourselves harbour this monster in our breasts? Should the eye be jealous that the ear hears, and disturb the functions of this or

<sup>1</sup> Lib. iii. de vit. Constant. c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. c. 7.

the other senses, instead of regarding them as its own, and enjoying their mutual advantage and comfort, what confusion would ensue!

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 26 :*

ST ALEXANDER : ST ETHELBERT, King and Confessor : ST PORPHYRIUS, Bishop of Gaza, who entered a monastery at the age of twenty-five, leaving his friends and country : ST VICTOR or VITRE of Arcis, anchoret, glorified by God with many miracles.

## FEBRUARY 27

## ST LEANDER, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF SEVILLE

(A.D. 596)

[From St Isidore of Seville, St Gregory the Great, and St Gregory of Tours, hist. lib. v. See Fleury, b. 34-36 ; Mabillon, Sæc. Ben. i ; Ceillier, t. xvii.]

ST LEANDER was of an illustrious family, and born at Carthagera, in Spain. He had two brothers, St Fulgentius, Bishop of Ecija and Carthagera, and St Isidore, our saint's successor in the see of Seville. He had also one sister, Florentia by name, who had consecrated herself to God in the state of virginity. He set them an example of that piety which they faithfully imitated. He entered into a monastery very young, where he lived many years, and attained to an eminent degree of virtue and sacred learning. These qualities occasioned his being promoted to the see of Seville: but his change of condition made little or no alteration in his method of life, though it brought on him a great increase of care and solicitude for the salvation of those whom God had put under his care, as well as for the necessities of the whole church, that of Spain in particular. This kingdom was then possessed by the Visigoths, or Western-Goths; who, while Theodoric settled the Ostrogoths, or Eastern-Goths, in Italy, had passed the Alps, and founded their kingdom, first in Languedoc, and soon after, about the year 470, in Spain. These Goths, being for the generality all infected with Arianism, established this heresy wherever they came, so that when St Leander was made bishop, it had reigned in Spain a hundred years. This was his great affliction; however, by his tears and prayers to God, and by his most zealous and unwearied endeavours both at home and abroad, he became the happy instrument of the conversion of that nation to the catholic faith. It was a subject of great joy to the whole church to behold the wonderful blessing bestowed by Almighty God on the labours of our saint, but to none more than St Gregory the Great, who wrote to St Leander to congratulate him on the subject.

This holy prelate was no less zealous in the reformation of manners than in restoring the purity of faith; and he planted the seeds of that zeal and fervour which afterwards produced so many martyrs and saints. His zeal in this regard appeared in the good regulations set on foot with this intent in the council of Seville, which was called by him, and of which

he was, as it were, the soul. In 589, he assisted at the third council of Toledo, of seventy-two bishops or their deputies, in which were drawn up twenty-three canons relating to discipline, to repair the breaches the Arian heresy had made in fomenting disorders of several kinds. One of these was that the Arian clergy cohabited with their wives; but the council forbade such of them as were converted to do so, enjoining them a separation from the same chamber, and, if possible, from the same house.<sup>1</sup> This council commanded also the rigorous execution of all penitential canons without any abatement. The pious Cardinal D'Aguirre has written a learned dissertation on this subject.<sup>2</sup>

St Leander, sensible of the importance of prayer, which is in a devout life what a spring is in a watch or the main wheel in an engine, laboured particularly to encourage true devotion in all persons, but particularly those of the monastic profession, of which state it is the very essence and constituent. His letter to his sister Florentia, a holy virgin, is called his Rule of a Monastic Life. It turns chiefly on the contempt of the world and on the exercises of prayer. This saint also reformed the Spanish liturgy. In this liturgy, and in the third council of Toledo, in conformity to the eastern churches, the Nicene creed was appointed to be read at mass to express a detestation of the Arian heresy. Other western churches, with the Roman, soon imitated this devotion. St Leander was visited by frequent distempers, particularly the gout, which St Gregory, who was often afflicted with the same, writing to him, calls a favour and mercy of heaven. This holy doctor of Spain died about the year 596, on the 27th of February, as Mabillon proves from his epitaph. The church of Seville has been a metropolitan see ever since the third century. The cathedral is the most magnificent, both as to structure and ornament, of any in all Spain.

The contempt of the world which the gospel so strongly inculcates, and which St Leander so eminently practised and taught, is the foundation of a spiritual life; but is of far greater extent than most Christians conceive, for it requires no less than a total disengagement of the affections from earthly things. Those whom God raises to perfect virtue, and closely unites to himself, must cut off and put away every thing that can be an obstacle to this perfect union. Their will must be thoroughly purified from all dross of inordinate affections before it can be perfectly absorbed in his. This they who are particularly devoted to the divine service are especially to take notice of. If this truth was imprinted in the manner that it ought, in the hearts of those who enrol themselves in the service of the church, or who live in cloisters, they would be replenished with heavenly blessings, and the church would have the comfort of seeing

<sup>1</sup> Conc. t. v. p. 998.

<sup>2</sup> Diss. 8 in Conc. Hisp.

apostles of nations revive amongst her clergy, and the monasteries again filled with Antonies, Bennets, and Bernards; whose sanctity, prayers, and example would even infuse into many others the true spirit of Christ amidst the desolation and general blindness of this unhappy age.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 27 :*

BLESSED ANNE LINE, English martyr in 1601. She was the daughter of a strict Calvinist, became a Catholic with her brother, and gave her life for the old faith : ST ALNOTH, anchorite, murdered by robbers : ST GALMIER, a locksmith of Lyons. He gave all, even his tools, to the poor. SAINTS JULIAN, CHRONION, and BESAS, martyrs. These were three generous soldiers who, grieved by the cowardice of many nobles who had sacrificed to the gods, under Decius, accepted a glorious martyrdom. ST LEANDER : ST NESTOR, Bishop and martyr, crucified in imitation of his Divine Master, under Decius, in 250 : and ST THALILÆUS, a Cilician recluse in Syria, who spent sixty years in a life of asceticism.

## FEBRUARY 28

### SS. ROMANUS AND LUPICINUS, ABBOTS

ROMANUS at thirty-five years of age left his relations, and spent some time in the monastery of Ainay (called in Latin Athanacense), at Lyons, at the great church at the conflux of the Saone and Rhone, which the faithful had built over the ashes of the famous martyrs of that city: for their bodies being burnt by the pagans, their ashes were thrown into the Rhone, but a great part of them was gathered by the Christians, and deposited in this place. Romanus a short time after took with him the institutions and conferences of Cassian, and retired into the forests of Mount Jura, between France and Switzerland, and fixed his abode at a place called Condate, at the conflux of the rivers Bienne and Aliere, where he found a spot of ground fit for culture, and some trees which furnished him with a kind of wild fruit. Here he spent his time in praying, reading, and labouring for his subsistence. Lupicinus, his brother, came to him some time after in company with others, who were followed by several more, drawn by the fame of the virtue and miracles of these two saints. Here they built the monastery of Condate, and, their numbers increasing, that of Leuconne, two miles distant to the north, and, on a rock, a nunnery called La Beaume (now St Romain de la Roche), which no men were allowed ever to enter, and where St Romanus chose his burial place. The brothers governed the monks jointly and in great harmony, though Lupicinus was more inclined to severity of the two. He usually resided at Leuconne with one hundred and fifty monks. The brethren at Condate, when they were enriched with many lands, changed their diet, which was only bread made of barley and bran, and pulse dressed often without salt or oil, and brought to table wheat-bread, fish, and variety of dishes. Lupicinus being informed hereof by Romanus, came to Condate on the sixth day after this innovation and corrected the abuse. The abstinence which he prescribed his monks was milder than that practised by the oriental monks and by those of Lerins,

partly because the Gauls were naturally great eaters, and partly because they were employed in very hard manual labour. But they never touched fowls or any flesh-meat, and only were allowed milk and eggs in time of sickness. Lupicinus, for his own part, used no other bed than a chair or a hard board; never touched wine, and would scarce ever suffer a drop either of oil or milk to be poured on his pulse. In summer his subsistence for many years was only hard bread moistened in cold water, so that he could eat it with a spoon. His tunic was made of various skins of beasts sewn together, with a cowl: he used wooden shoes, and wore no stockings unless when he was obliged to go out of the monastery. St Romanus died about the year 460, and is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on the 28th of February. St Lupicinus survived him almost twenty years, and is honoured in the Roman Martyrology on the 21st of March. He was succeeded in the abbacy of Condate by Minaucius, who, in 480, chose St Eugendus his coadjutor. See the lives of the two brothers, SS. Romanus and Lupicinus, and that of St Eugendus or Oyend, compiled by a monk of Condate of the same age; St Gregory of Tours, lib. de Vitis Patr. c. 1, Mabill. Annal. Ben. lib. i. ad an. 510, t. i. p. 23; Tillemont, t. xvi. p. 142; Bulteau, lib. i.

*The following feasts are celebrated on February 28 :*

MARTYRS who died in the great pestilence in Alexandria, 261-263 : ST PROTERIUS, Patriarch of Alexandria, martyr, ordained by St CYRIL : SAINTS ROMANUS and LUPERCINUS, Abbots, who governed their monks jointly and in harmony, though "Lupercinus was the more inclined to severity of the two."

## FEBRUARY 29

### ST OSWALD, BISHOP OF WORCESTER AND ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

(A.D. 992)

[From his life, wrote by Eadmer; also from Florence of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, and, above all, the elegant and accurate author of the history of Ramsey, published by the learned Mr Gale, p. 385. The life of this saint, wrote by Folcard, Abbot of Thorney in 1068, Wharton thinks not extant. Mabillon doubts whether it be not that which we have in Capgrave and Surius. See also Portiforium S. Oswaldi Archiep. Eborac. Codex MS. crassus in 8vo. exarates circa annum 1064, in Bennet College, Cambridge, mentioned by Waneley, Catal. p. 110.]

ST OSWALD was nephew to St Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury, and to Oskitell, Bishop first of Dorchester, afterwards of York. He was educated by St Odo, and made Dean of Winchester; but passing into France, took the monastic habit at Fleury. Being recalled to serve the church, he succeeded St Dunstan in the see of Worcester about the year 959. He shone as a bright star in this dignity, and established a monastery of monks at Westberry, a village in his diocese. He was employed by Duke Aylwin in superintending his foundation of the great monastery of Ramsey, in an island formed by marshes and the river Ouse in Huntingdonshire, in

972. St Oswald was made Archbishop of York in 974, and he dedicated the church of Ramsey under the names of the Blessed Virgin, St Benedict, and all holy virgins. Nothing of this rich mitred abbey remains standing except an old gate-house and a neglected statue of the founder, Aylwin, with keys and a ragged staff in his hand to denote his office; for he was cousin to the glorious King Edgar, the valiant general of his armies, and the chief judge and magistrate of the kingdom, with the title of alderman of England, and half king, as the historian of Ramsey usually styles him. St Oswald was almost always occupied in visiting his diocese, preaching without intermission, and reforming abuses. He was a great encourager of learning and learned men. St Dunstan obliged him to retain the see of Worcester with that of York. Whatever intermission his function allowed him he spent it at St Mary's, a church and monastery of Benedictins which he had built at Worcester, where he joined with the monks in their monastic exercises. This church from that time became the cathedral. The saint, to nourish in his heart the sentiments of humility and charity, had everywhere twelve poor persons at his table, whom he served, and also washed and kissed their feet. After having sat thirty-three years he fell sick at St Mary's in Worcester, and having received the Extreme-unction and Viaticum, continued in prayer, repeating often, "Glory be to the Father," &c., with which words he expired amidst his monks, on the 29th of February, 992. His body was taken up ten years after and enshrined by Adulph his successor, and was illustrated by miracles. It was afterwards translated to York on the 15th of October, which day was appointed his principal festival.

St Oswald made quick progress in the path of perfect virtue, because he studied with the utmost earnestness to deny himself and his own will, listening attentively to that fundamental maxim of the Eternal Truth which St Bennet, of whose holy order he became a bright light, repeats with great energy. This holy founder declares in the close of his rule that he who desires to give himself up to God must trample all earthly things under his feet, renounce every thing that is not God, and die to all earthly affections, so as to attain to a perfect disengagement and nakedness of heart, that God may fill and entirely possess it, in order to establish therein the kingdom of his grace and pure love for ever.

ST OSWALD is the only Saint whose feast is celebrated on this date, which only recurs every fourth year.



MARCH 1

## ST DAVID, ARCHBISHOP, PATRON OF WALES

(About the year 544)

[See his life by Giraldus Cambrensis, in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, t. ii. ; also Doctor Brown Willis, and Wilkins, *Conc. Britan. & Hibern.* t. i.]

ST DAVID, in Welsh Dewid, was son of Xantus, prince of Ceretica, now Cardiganshire. He was brought up in the service of God, and, being ordained priest, retired into the Isle of Wight and embraced an ascetic life, under the direction of Paulinus, a learned and holy man, who had been a disciple of St Germanus of Auxerre. He is said by the sign of the cross to have restored sight to his master, which he had lost by old age and excessive weeping in prayer. He studied a long time to prepare himself for the functions of the holy ministry. At length, coming out of his solitude, like the Baptist out of the desert, he preached the word of eternal life to the Britons. He built a chapel at Glastonbury, a place which had been consecrated to the divine worship by the first apostles of this island. He founded twelve monasteries, the principal of which was in the vale of Ross, near Menevia, where he formed many great pastors and eminent servants of God. By his rule he obliged all his monks to assiduous manual labour in the spirit of penance: he allowed them the use of no cattle to ease them at their work in tilling the ground, They were never suffered to speak but on occasions of absolute necessity, and they never ceased to pray, at least mentally, during their labour. They returned late in the day to the monastery, to read, write, and pray. Their food was only bread and vegetables, with a little salt, and they never drank anything better than a little milk mingled with water. After their repast they spent three hours in prayer and adoration; then took a little rest, rose at cock-crowing, and continued in prayer till they went out to work. Their habit was of the skins of beasts. When any one petitioned to be admitted, he waited ten days at the door, during which time he was tried by harsh words, repeated refusals, and painful labours, that he might learn to die to himself. When he was admitted, he left all his worldly substance behind him, for the monastery never received any thing on the score of admission. All the monks discovered their most secret thoughts and temptations to their abbot.

The Pelagian heresy springing forth a second time in Britain, the bishops, in order to suppress it, held a synod at Brevy, in Cardiganshire,

in 512, or rather in 519.<sup>1</sup> St David, being invited to it, went thither, and in that venerable assembly confuted and silenced the infernal monster by his eloquence, learning, and miracles. On the spot where this council was held a church was afterwards built called Llan-Devi Brevi, or the church of St David near the river Brevi. At the close of the synod, St Dubritius, the Archbishop of Caerleon, resigned his see to St David, whose tears and opposition were only to be overcome by the absolute command of the synod; which, however, allowed him at his request the liberty to transfer his see from Caerleon, then a populous city, to Menevia, now called St David's, a retired place, formed by nature for solitude, being as it were almost cut off from the rest of the island, though now an intercourse is opened to it from Milford Haven. Soon after the former synod, another was assembled by St David at a place called Victoria; in which the acts of the first were confirmed, and several canons added relating to discipline, which were afterwards confirmed by the authority of the Roman church; and these two synods were, as it were, the rule and standard of the British churches. As for St David, Giraldus adds that he was the great ornament and pattern of his age. He spoke with great force and energy, but his example was more powerful than his eloquence; and he has in all succeeding ages been the glory of the British church. He continued in his last see many years; and having founded several monasteries, and been the spiritual father of many saints, both British and Irish, died about the year 544, in a very advanced age. St Kentigern saw his soul borne up by angels into heaven. He was buried in his church of St Andrew, which hath since taken his name, with the town and the whole diocese. Near the church stand several chapels, formerly resorted to with great devotion; the principal is that of St Nun, mother of St David, near which is a beautiful well still frequented by pilgrims. Another chapel is sacred to St Lily, surnamed Gwas-Dewy, that is, St David's man, for he was his beloved disciple and companion in his retirement. He is honoured there on the 3rd, and St Nun, who lived and died the spiritual mother of many religious women, on the 2nd of March. The three first days of March were formerly holidays in South Wales in honour of these three saints; at present only the first is kept a festival throughout all Wales. John of Glastonbury informs us that in the reign of King Edgar, in the year of Christ 962, the relics of St David were translated with great solemnity from the vale of Ross to Glastonbury, together with a portion of the relics of St Stephen the Protomartyr.

By singing assiduously the divine praises with pure and holy hearts, dead to the world and all inordinate passions, monks are styled angels of the earth. The divine praise is the primary act of the love of God;

<sup>1</sup> See Wilkins, Conc. t. i.

for a soul enamoured of his adorable goodness and perfections summons up all her powers to express the complacency she takes in his infinite greatness and bliss, and sounds forth his praises with all her strength. In this entertainment she feels an insatiable delight and sweetness, and with longing desires aspires after that bliss in which she will love and praise without intermission or impediment. By each act of divine praise the fervour of charity and its habit, and with it every spiritual good and every rich treasure, is increased in her: moreover, God in return heaps upon her the choicest blessings of his grace. Therefore, though the acts of divine praise seem directly to be no more than a tribute or homage of our affections which we tender to God, the highest advantages accrue from these exercises to our souls.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 1 :*

ST ALBINUS, Bishop of Angers, who was "both humble and courageous in maintaining the law of God and the canons of the church": ST DAVID: ST MONAN, slain with a great number of Christians by the infidel army that ravaged the county of Fife in 874: VENERABLE STEPHEN ROWSHAM, priest, English martyr, 1587: ST SWIDBERT or Swibert "The Ancient," Bishop, an English monk who preached in Holland and Germany.

## MARCH 2

### ST CEADA, OR CHAD, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

He was brother to St Cedd, Bishop of London, and the two holy priests Celin and Cymbel, and had his education in the monastery of Lindisfarne, under St Aidan. For his greater improvement in sacred letters and divine contemplation he passed into Ireland, and spent a considerable time in the company of St Egbert till he was called back by his brother, St Cedd, to assist him in settling the monastery of Lestingay, which he had founded in the mountains of the Deiri, that is, the Wolds of Yorkshire. St Cedd being made Bishop of London, or of the East Saxons, left to him the entire government of this house. Oswi having yielded up Bernicia, or the northern part of his kingdom, to his son Alcfrid, this prince sent St Wilfrid into France that he might be consecrated to the bishopric of the Northumbrian kingdom, or of York; but he stayed so long abroad that Oswi himself nominated St Chad to that dignity, who was ordained by Wini, Bishop of Winchester, assisted by two British prelates, in 666. Bede assures us that he zealously devoted himself to all the laborious functions of his charge, visiting his diocese on foot, preaching the gospel, and seeking out the poorest and most abandoned persons to instruct and comfort in the meanest cottages and in the fields. When St Theodorus, Archbishop of Canterbury, arrived in England, in his general visitation of all the English churches, he adjudged the see of York to St Wilfrid. St Chad made him this answer: "If you judge that I have not duly received the episcopal ordination, I

willingly resign this charge, having never thought myself worthy of it: but which, however unworthy, I submitted to undertake in obedience." The archbishop was charmed with his candour and humility, would not admit his abdication, but supplied certain rites which he judged defective in his ordination: and St Chad, leaving the see of York, retired to his monastery of Lestingay, but was not suffered to bury himself long in that solitude. Jaruman, Bishop of the Mercians, dying, St Chad was called upon to take upon him the charge of that most extensive diocese.<sup>1</sup> He was the fifth bishop of the Mercians, and first fixed that see at Lichfield, so called from a great number of martyrs slain and buried there under Maximianus Herculeus; the name signifying the field of carcasses. Hence this city bears for its arms a landscape, covered with the bodies of martyrs. St Theodorus, considering St Chad's old age, and the great extent of his diocese, absolutely forbade him to make his visitations on foot, as he used to do at York. When the laborious duties of his charge allowed him to retire, he enjoyed God in solitude with seven or eight monks, whom he had settled in a place near his cathedral. He was so strongly affected with the fear of the divine judgments that as often as it thundered he went to the church and prayed prostrate all the time the storm continued, in remembrance of the dreadful day in which Christ will come to judge the world. By the bounty of King Wulfere, he founded a monastery at a place called Barrow, in the province of Lindsay (in the northern part of Lincolnshire). St Chad governed his diocese of Lichfield two years and a half, and died in the great pestilence on the 2nd of March, in 673. Bede gives the following relation of his passage: "Among the eight monks whom he kept with him at Lichfield, was one Owini, who came with Queen Ethelred, commonly called St Audry, from the province of the East Angles, and was her major-domo, and the first officer of her court, till quitting the world, clad in a mean garment, and carrying an axe and a hatchet in his hand, he went to the monastery of Lestingay, signifying that he came to work, and not to be idle; which he made good by his behaviour in the monastic state. This monk declared that he one day heard a joyful melody of some persons sweetly singing, which descended from heaven into the bishop's oratory, filled the same for about half an hour, then mounted again to heaven. After this, the bishop opening his window, and seeing him at his work, bade him call the other seven brethren. When the eight monks were entered his oratory, he exhorted them to preserve peace, and religiously observe the rules of regular discipline; adding that the amiable guest who was wont to visit their brethren had vouchsafed to come to him that day, and to call him out of this world. Wherefore he earnestly recommended his passage to their prayers, and

<sup>1</sup> The first Bishop of the Mercians was Diuma, a Scot; the second Keollach, of the same nation; the third Trumhere, who had been Abbot of Gethling, in the kingdom of the Northumbrians; the fourth Jaruman.

pressed them to prepare for their own, the hour of which is uncertain, by watching, prayer, and good works." The bishop fell presently into a languishing distemper, which daily increased, till, on the seventh day, having received the body and blood of our Lord, he departed to bliss, to which he was invited by the happy soul of his brother St Cedd and a company of angels with heavenly music. He was buried in the Church of St Mary, in Lichfield; but his body was soon after removed to that of St Peter, in both places honoured by miraculous cures, as Bede mentions. His relics were afterwards translated into the great church which was built in 1148, under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and St Chad, which is now the cathedral, and they remained there till the change of religion.<sup>1</sup> See Bede, lib. iii. c. 28; lib. iv. c. 2 and 3.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 2 :*

ST CHAD : ST CHARLES, Earl of Flanders, martyr : ST JOAVIN or JOEVIN, Bishop, a disciple of St Paul of Leon, in Great Britain : ST MARMAN, Bishop, who instructed the Northumbrian princes, Oswald and Oswi, in religion ; a man of great power in prayer : MARTYRS under the Lombards in the sixth age : and ST SIMPLICIUS, an ornament of the Roman clergy, who succeeded Hilarius as pope in 497. He sustained the Church amidst the greatest storms.

### MARCH 3

## ST CUNEGUNDES, EMPRESS

(A.D. 1040)

[From her life written by a canon of Bamberg, about the year 1152 ; also the Dissertation of Henschenius, p. 267.]

ST CUNEGUNDES was the daughter of Sigefride, the first Count of Luxemburg, and Hadeswige, his pious wife. They instilled into her from her cradle the most tender sentiments of piety, and married her to St Henry, Duke of Bavaria, who, upon the death of the Emperor Otho III, was chosen King of the Romans, and crowned at Mentz on the 6th of June, 1002. She was crowned at Paderborn, on St Laurence's day, on which occasion she made great presents to the churches of that city. In the year 1014, she went with her husband to Rome, and received the imperial crown with him from the hands of Pope Benedict VIII. She had, by St Henry's consent before her marriage, made a vow of virginity. Calumniators afterwards accused her to him of freedoms with other men. The holy empress, to remove the scandal of such a slander, trusting in God, the protector of innocence, in proof of hers, walked over red-hot ploughshares without being hurt. The emperor condemned his too scrupulous fears and credulity, and made her ample amends. They lived from that time in the strictest union of hearts, conspiring to promote in everything God's honour and the advancement of piety.

Going once to make a retreat in Hesse, she fell dangerously ill, and

<sup>1</sup> At the Reformation the remains of St Chad were rescued from destruction and they now lie in the Cathedral (Catholic) at Birmingham which is named after him.

made a vow to found a monastery, if she recovered, in a place then called Capungen, now Kaffungen, near Cassel, in the diocese of Paderborn, which she executed in a stately manner, and gave it to nuns of the order of St Benedict. Before it was finished St Henry died, in 1024. She earnestly recommended his soul to the prayers of others, especially to her dear nuns, and expressed her longing desire of joining them. She had already exhausted her treasures and her patrimony in founding bishoprics and monasteries, and in relieving the poor. Whatever was rich or magnificent she thought better suited churches than her palace. She had, therefore, little now left to give. But still thirsting to embrace perfect evangelical poverty, and to renounce all to serve God without obstacle, on the anniversary day of her husband's death, 1025, she assembled a great number of prelates to the dedication of her church of Kaffungen; and after the gospel was sung at mass, offered on the altar a piece of the true cross, and then put off her imperial robes, and clothed herself with a poor habit: her hair was cut off, and the bishop put on her veil, and a ring as the pledge of her fidelity to her heavenly spouse. After she was consecrated to God in religion, she seemed entirely to forget that she had been empress, and behaved as the last in the house, being persuaded that she was so before God. Thus she passed the fifteen last years of her life, never suffering the least preference to be given her above any one in the community. Her mortifications at length reduced her to a very weak condition, and brought on her last sickness. Her monastery and the whole city of Cassel were grievously afflicted at the thought of their approaching loss; she alone appeared without concern, lying on a coarse hair-cloth, ready to give up the ghost, whilst the prayers of the agonising were read by her side. Perceiving they were preparing a cloth fringed with gold to cover her corpse after her death, she changed colour and ordered it to be taken away; nor could she be at rest till she was promised she should be buried as a poor religious in her habit. She died on the 3rd of March, 1040. Her body was carried to Bamberg, and buried near that of her husband. The greatest part of her relics still remain in the same church. She was solemnly canonized by Innocent III in 1200. The author of her life relates many miracles wrought at the tomb, or by the intercession of this holy virgin and widow.

Few arrive at any degree of perfection among those who aspire after virtue, because many behave as if they placed it barely in multiplying exercises of piety and good works. This costs little to self-love, which it rather feeds by entertaining a secret vanity, or self-complacency, in those who are not very careful in watching over their hearts. It is a common thing to see persons who have passed forty or fifty years in the constant practice of penance and all religious exercises, and the use of the

most holy sacraments, still subject to habitual imperfections and venial disorders, incompatible with a state of sanctity or perfection. They give marks of sudden resentment if they happen to be rebuked or despised: are greedy of the esteem of others, take a secret satisfaction in applause, love too much their own ease and conveniences, and seek those things which flatter self-love. How much are these souls their own enemies by not giving themselves to God without reserve, and taking a firm resolution to labour diligently in watching over themselves, and cutting off all irregular attachments, and purifying their hearts! The neglect of this fosters many habitual little disorders and venial sins, which incredibly obstruct the work of our sanctification and the advancement of the kingdom of divine grace in our souls. These little enemies wilfully caressed, weaken our good desires, defile even our spiritual actions with a thousand imperfections, and stop the abundant effusion with which the Holy Ghost is infinitely desirous to communicate himself to our souls, and to fill them with his light, grace, peace, and holy joy. The saints by the victory over themselves, and by making it their principal study to live in the most perfect disengagement and purity of heart, offered to God, even in their smallest actions, pure and full sacrifices of love, praise, and obedience.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 3 :*

ST ÆLRED, Abbot, an Englishman : ST CUNIGUNDES : ST EMETERIUS and ST CHELIDONIUS, soldiers of the Roman army in Spain. Their persecutors burned the records of their martyrdom, envying the Christians the history of so glorious a triumph : ST MARINUS and ST ASTERIUS, martyrs about the year 272 : ST LAMALISSE, after whom a small Scottish island is still called : and ST WINWALOE (or Winwāloc ?), consecrated to God from his birth by his pious parents, of the family of the princes of Wales ; a monk almost continual in prayer.

#### MARCH 4

### ST CASIMIR, PRINCE OF POLAND

(A.D. 1433)

[From his life, compiled by Zachary Ferrier, legate of Leo X in Poland, thirty-six years after his death ; and an authentic relation of his miracles, with many circumstances of his life, by Gregory Swiecicki, canon of Vilna ; also the commentary of Henschenius, p. 337.]

ST CASIMIR was the third among the thirteen children of Casimir III, King of Poland, and of Elizabeth of Austria, daughter to the Emperor Albert II, a most virtuous woman, who died in 1505. He was born in 1458, on the 3rd of October. From his childhood he was remarkably pious and devout. His preceptor was John Dugloss, called Longinus, canon of Cracow, a man of extraordinary learning and piety, who constantly refused all bishoprics and other dignities of the church and state which were pressed upon him. Uladislas, the eldest son, was elected King of Bohemia in 1471, and became King of Hungary in 1490. Our saint was the second son ; John Albert the third son, succeeded the father in

the kingdom of Poland in 1492; and Alexander, the fourth son, was called to the same in 1501. Casimir and the other princes were so affectionately attached to the holy man, who was their preceptor, that they could not bear to be separated from him. But Casimir profited most by his pious maxims and example. By living always under a sense of the divine presence he remained perpetually united to, and absorbed in, his Creator, maintained an uninterrupted cheerfulness of temper, and was mild and affable to all. He respected the least ceremonies of the church: everything that tended to promote piety was dear to him. He was particularly devout to the passion of our blessed Saviour, the very thought of which excited him to tears, and threw him into transports of love. He was no less piously affected towards the sacrifice of the altar, at which he always assisted with such reverence and attention that he seemed in raptures. And as a mark of his singular devotion to the Blessed Virgin, he composed, or at least frequently recited, the long hymn that bears his name, a copy of which was, by his desire, buried with him. His love for Jesus Christ showed itself in his regard for the poor, who are his members, to whose relief he applied whatever he had, and employed his credit with his father, and his brother Uladislav, King of Bohemia, to procure them succour. His compassion made him feel in himself the afflictions of every one.

The Palatines and other nobles of Hungary, dissatisfied with Matthias Corvin, their king, son of the great Huniades, begged the King of Poland to allow them to place his son Casimir on the throne. The saint, not then quite fifteen years of age, was very unwilling to consent; but in compliance with his father's will he went, at the head of an army of twenty thousand men, to the frontiers in 1471. There hearing that Matthias had formed an army of sixteen thousand men to defend him, and that all differences were accommodated between him and his people, and that Pope Sixtus IV had sent an embassy to divert his father from that expedition, he joyfully returned, having with difficulty obtained his father's consent so to do. However, as his dropping this project was disagreeable to the king his father, not to increase his affliction by appearing before him he did not go directly to Cracow, but retired to the Castle of Dobzki, three miles from that city, where he continued three months in the practice of penance. Having learned the injustice of the attempt against the King of Hungary, in which obedience to his father's command prevailed upon him to embark when he was very young, he could never be engaged to resume it by fresh pressing invitation of the Hungarians, or the iterated orders and entreaties of his father. The twelve years he lived after this he spent in sanctifying himself in the same manner as he had done before. He observed to the last an untainted chastity, notwithstanding the advice of physicians who excited him to marry, imagining, upon some false principle,



this to be a means necessary to preserve his life. Being wasted with a lingering consumption, he foretold his last hour, and having prepared himself for it by redoubling his exercises of piety, and receiving the sacraments of the church, he made a happy end at Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, on the 4th of March, 1484, being twenty-three years and five months old. He was buried in the Church of St Stanislas. So many were the miracles wrought by his intercession that Swiecicki, a canon of Vilna, wrote a whole volume of them from good memoirs in 1604. He was canonized by Pope Leo X, whose legate in Poland, Zachary Ferrier, wrote the saint's life. His body, and all the rich stuffs it was wrapped in, were found quite entire, and exhaling a sweet smell one hundred and twenty years after his death, notwithstanding the excessive moisture of the vault. It is honoured in a large rich chapel of marble, built on purpose in that church. St Casimir is the patron of Poland and several other places, and is proposed to youth as a particular pattern of purity. His original picture is to be seen in his chapel in St German des Prez in Paris, built by John Casimir, King of Poland, the last of the family of Waza, who, renouncing his crown, retired to Paris, and died Abbot of St Germain's in 1668.

What is there on earth which can engage the affections of a Christian, or be the object of his ambition, in whose soul God desires to establish his kingdom? Whoever has conceived a just idea of this immense happiness and dignity must look upon all the glittering bubbles of this world as empty and vain, and consider every thing in this life barely as it can advance or hinder the great object of all his desires. Few arrive at this happy and glorious state, because scarce any one seeks it with his whole heart, and has the courage sincerely to renounce all things and die to himself: and this precious jewel cannot be purchased upon any other terms. The kingdom of God can only be planted in a soul upon the ruins of self-love: so long as this reigns, it raises insuperable obstacles to the perfect establishment of the empire of divine love. The amiable Jesus lives in all souls which he animates by his sanctifying grace, and the Holy Ghost dwells in all such. The sovereign King of men and their merciful Redeemer is properly said to reign only in those souls which study effectually, and without reserve, to destroy in their affections whatever is opposite to his divine will, to subdue all their passions, and to subject all their powers to his holy love. Such fall not into any venial sins with full deliberation, and wipe away those of frailty into which they are betrayed, by the compunction and penance in which they constantly live, and by the constant attention with which they watch daily over themselves. They pray with the utmost earnestness that God deliver them from all the power of the enemy, and establish in all their affections the perfect empire of his grace and love; and to fulfil his will in the most

perfect manner in all their actions is their most earnest desire and hearty endeavour. How bountifully does God reward, even in this life, those who are thus liberal toward him! St Casimir, who had tasted of this happiness, and learned truly to value the heavenly grace, loathed all earthly pomp and delights.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 4 :*

ST ADRIAN, Bishop of St Andrews, slain by the Danes in one of their descents on Scotland :  
ST CASIMIR : THE VENERABLE NICHOLAS HORNER, English martyr, 1590 : and ST LUCIUS, Pope and martyr, 253, whose body is now venerated in the church of St Cecily, in Rome.

MARCH 5

## SAINTS ADRIAN AND EUBULUS OF PALESTINE, MARTYRS

(A.D. 309)

[From Eusebius's History of the Martyrs of Palestine, c. 11, p. 341.]

IN the seventh year of Diocletian's persecution, continued by Galerius Maximianus, when Firmilian, the most bloody governor of Palestine, had stained Cæsarea with the blood of many illustrious martyrs, Adrian and Eubulus came out of the country called Magantia to Cæsarea, in order to visit the holy confessors there. At the gates of the city they were asked, as others were, whither they were going and upon what errand. They ingenuously confessed the truth, and were brought before the president, who ordered them to be tortured, and their sides to be torn with iron hooks, and then condemned them to be exposed to wild beasts. Two days after, when the pagans at Cæsarea celebrated the festival of the public Genius, Adrian was exposed to a lion, and not being despatched by that beast, but only mangled, was at length killed by the sword. Eubulus was treated in the same manner, two days later. The judge offered him his liberty if he would sacrifice to idols; but the saint preferred a glorious death, and was the last that suffered in this persecution at Cæsarea, which had now continued twelve years under three successive governors, Flavian, Urban, and Firmilian. Divine vengeance pursuing the cruel Firmilian, he was that same year beheaded for his crimes, by the emperor's order, as his predecessor Urban had been two years before.

It is in vain that we take the name of Christians, or pretend to follow Christ, unless we carry our crosses after him. It is in vain that we hope to share in his glory, and in his kingdom, if we accept not the condition.<sup>1</sup> We cannot arrive at heaven by any other road but that which Christ held, who bequeathed his cross to all his elect as their portion and inheritance in this world. None can be exempted from this rule without renouncing

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 24 ; Luke xxiv. 26.

his title to heaven. Let us sound our own hearts, and see if our sentiments are conformable to these principles of the holy religion which we profess. Are our lives a constant exercise of patience under all trials, and a continual renunciation of our senses and corrupt inclinations, by the practice of self-denial and penance? Are we not impatient under pain or sickness, fretful under disappointments, disturbed and uneasy at the least accidents which are disagreeable to our nature, harsh and peevish in reproving the faults of others, and slothful and unmortified in endeavouring to correct our own? What a monstrous contradiction is it to call ourselves followers of Christ, yet to live irreconcilable enemies to his cross! We can never separate Christ from his cross, on which he sacrificed himself for us, that he might unite us on it eternally to himself. Let us courageously embrace it, and he will be our comfort and support, as he was of his martyrs.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 5 :*

ST ADRIAN AND ST EUBULUS: ST JOHN JOSEPH OF THE CROSS, Franciscan, 1654-1739: ST KIARAN or Kenerin, styled by the Irish the first-born of their saints. He was somewhat older than St Patrick: ST PHILIP OF JESUS, O.S.F., Patron of Mexico City: ST ROGER, a disciple of St Francis of Assisi. His gift of prophecy and of miracles made him illustrious in life and after death.

## MARCH 6

### ST CHRODEGANG, BISHOP OF METZ, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 766)

[From Paul the Deacon, lib. ii. de Gest. Longob. c. 16; Henschenius, p. 453; Mabill. Annal. Ben. lib. xxii. t. ii. and Act SS. Ord. Ben. t. iv. p. 184; Ceillier, t. xviii. p. 176; his life, published by George Von Eckart, Hist. Franciæ Orient. t. i. p. 912; also Meurisse, Hist. des Evêques de Metz, lib. ii.]

This saint, nobly born in Brabant, then called Hasbain, was educated in the Abbey of St Tron, and for his great learning and virtue was made referendary, chancellor of France, and prime-minister by Charles Martel, Mayor of the French Palace, in 737. He was always meanly clad from his youth; he macerated his body by fasting, watching, and hair-cloths, and allowed his senses no superfluous gratifications of any kind. His charity to all in distress seemed to know no bounds; he supported an incredible number of poor, and was the protector and father of orphans and widows. Soon after the death of Charles Martel, he was chosen Bishop of Metz, in 742. Prince Pepin, the son and successor of Charles, uncle to our saint by his mother, Landrada, would not consent to his being ordained but on the condition that he should still continue at the helm of the state. Chrodegang always retained the same sweetness, humility, recollection, and simplicity in his behaviour and dress. He constantly wore a rough hair-shirt under his clothes, spent good part of the night in watching, and usually at his devotions watered his cheeks with tears. Pope Stephen III being oppressed by the Lombards, took refuge in France. Chrodegang

went to conduct him over the Alps, and King Pepin was no sooner informed that he had passed these mountains on his way to France but he sent Charles, his eldest son, to accompany him to Pont-yon, in Champagne, where the king was to receive him. The pope being three miles distant from that city, the king came to meet him, and having joined him alighted from his horse, and prostrated himself, as did the queen, his children, and the lords of his court; and the king walked some time by the side of his horse to do him honour. The pope retired to the monastery of St Denys; and King Pepin, in the year 754, sent St Chrodegang on an embassy to Astulph, King of the Lombards, praying him out of respect to the holy apostles not to commit any hostilities against Rome, nor to oblige the Romans to superstitions contrary to their laws, and to restore the towns which he had taken from the holy see; but this embassy was without effect. The saint, in 755, converted the chapter of secular canons of his cathedral into a regular community, in which he was imitated by many other churches. He composed for his regular canons a rule, consisting of thirty-four articles. In the first he lays down humility for the foundation of all the rest.<sup>1</sup> He obliged the canons to confess at least twice a year to the bishop, before the beginning of Advent and Lent.<sup>2</sup> But these churches, even that of Metz, have again secularized themselves. The saint built and endowed the monasteries of St Peter, that of Gorze, and a third in the diocese of Worms, called Lorsh or Laurisham. He died on the 6th of March, in 766, and was buried at Gorze, to which by his will, which is still extant, he demised several estates. He is named in the French, German, and Belgic Martyrologies.

The zeal of St Chrodegang in restoring the primitive and apostolic spirit in the clergy, particularly their fervour and devotion in the ministry of the altar, is the best proof of his ardour to advance the divine honour. To pay to Almighty God the public homage of praise and love, in the name of the whole church, is a function truly angelical. Those who by the divine appointment are honoured with this sublime charge resemble those glorious heavenly spirits who always assist before the throne of God. All Christians have a part in this heavenly function.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 6 :*

ST BALDREDE, immediate successor of St Mungo in the see of Glasgow : ST CADROE, a noble Scotchman who reformed the monastery of St Clement at Metz in 960 : ST CHRODEGANG, Bishop of Metz, whose zeal restored the primitive apostolic spirit among the clergy of his time : ST COLETTE, Abbess, a carpenter's daughter whose good parents gave her this name, a diminutive of Nicholas, having a great devotion for that saint : ST FRIDOLIN, Abbot : and ST KINEBURGE, St KINESWIDE, and ST TIBBA, the first two daughters of Penda, the cruel pagan King of Mercia, and the last named their kinswoman.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See the other regulations abridged in Fleury, &c., the entire rule published genuine in Le Cointe's Annals, t. v., and in the later editions of the councils.

MARCH 7

ST THOMAS OF AQUINO, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH  
AND CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1274)

[From his life, written by Bartholomew of Lucca, some time the saint's confessor: also another life compiled for his canonization by William of Tocco, Prior of Benevento, who had been personally acquainted with the saint, &c. See F. Tournon, in his life of St Thomas, in quarto, Paris, 1737.]

THE counts of Aquino, who have flourished in the kingdom of Naples these last ten centuries, derive their pedigree from a certain Lombard prince. They were allied to the kings of Sicily and Arragon, to St Louis of France, and many other sovereign houses of Europe. Our saint's grandfather having married the sister of the Emperor Frederick I, he was himself grand-nephew to that prince, and second cousin to the Emperor Henry VI, and in the third degree to Frederick II.<sup>1</sup> His father, Landulph, was Count of Aquino, and Lord of Loretto and Belcastro: his mother Theodora was daughter to the Count of Theate. The saint was born towards the end of the year 1225. St Austin observes<sup>2</sup> that the most tender age is subject to various passions, as of impatience, choler, jealousy, spite, and the like, which appear in children: no such thing was seen in Thomas. The serenity of his countenance, the constant evenness of his temper, his modesty and sweetness, were sensible marks that God prevented him with his early graces. The Count of Aquino conducted him to the Abbey of Mount Cassino, when he was but five years old, to be instructed by those good monks in the first principles of religion and learning; and his tutors soon saw with joy the rapidity of his progress, his great talents, and his happy dispositions to virtue. He was but ten years of age when the abbot told his father that it was time to send him to some university. The count, before he sent him to Naples, took him for some months to see his mother at his seat at Loretto, the place which about the end of that century grew famous for devotion to our Lady. Thomas was the admiration of the whole family. Amidst so much company, and so many servants, he appeared always as much recollected, and occupied on God, as he had been in the monastery; he spoke little, and always to the purpose; and he employed all his time in prayer, or serious and profitable exercises. His great delight seemed to be to intercede for, and to distribute, his parents' plentiful alms among the poor at the gate, whom he studied by a hundred ingenious contrivances to relieve. He robbed himself of his own victuals for that purpose; which his father having discovered, he gave him

<sup>1</sup> St Thomas was born at Belcastro: on his ancient illustrious pedigree and its branches, which still flourish in Calabria, see Barrius, de Antiquitate et Situ Calabriae, with the notes of Thomas Aceti, lib. iv. c. 2, p. 288, &c., where he refutes the Bollandists, who place his birth at Aquino in Campania, on the borders of that province.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. Conf. c. 7.

leave to distribute things at discretion, which liberty he made good use of for the little time he stayed. The countess, apprehensive of the dangers her son's innocence might be exposed to in an academy, desired that he should perform his studies with a private preceptor under her own eyes; but the father, knowing the great advantages of emulation and mutual communication in studies, was determined to send him to Naples, where the Emperor Frederick II, being exasperated against Bologna, had lately, in 1224, erected an university, forbidding students to resort to any other in Italy. This immediately drew thither great numbers of students, and with them disorder and licentiousness, like that described by St Austin in the great schools of Carthage.<sup>1</sup> Thomas soon perceived the dangers, and regretted the sanctuary of Mount Cassino: but by his extraordinary watchfulness, he lived here like the young Daniel in the midst of Babylon, or Toby in the infidel Ninive. He guarded his eyes with an extreme caution, shunned entirely all conversation with any woman whatever, and with any young men whose steady virtue did not render him perfectly secure as to their behaviour. 'Whilst others went to profane diversions, he retired into some church, or into his closet, making prayer and study his only pleasure. He learned rhetoric under Peter Martin, and philosophy under Peter of Hibernia, one of the most learned men of his age, and with such wonderful progress that he repeated the lessons more clearly than the master had explained them: yet his greater care was to advance daily in the science of the saints, by holy prayer, and all good works. His humility concealed them; but his charity and fervour sometimes betrayed his modesty, and discovered them, especially in his great alms, for which he deprived himself of almost all things, and in which he was careful to hide from his left hand what his right did.

The order of St Dominick, who had been dead twenty-two years, then abounded with men full of the Spirit of God. The frequent conversations Thomas had with one of that body, a very interior holy man, filled his heart with heavenly devotion and comfort, and inflamed him daily with a more ardent love of God, which so burned in his breast that at his prayers his countenance seemed one day, as it were, to dart rays of light, and he conceived a vehement desire to consecrate himself wholly to God in that order. His tutor perceived his inclinations, and informed the count of the matter, who omitted neither threats nor promises to defeat such a design. But the saint, not listening to flesh and blood in the call of heaven, demanded with earnestness to be admitted into the order, and accordingly received the habit in the convent of Naples, in 1243, being then seventeen years old. The Countess Theodora his mother, being informed of it, set out for Naples to disengage him, if possible, from that state of life. Her son, on the first news of her journey, begged his superiors to remove him,

<sup>1</sup> Conf. lib. v. c. 8.



## SAINT THOMAS AQUINI

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Thomas, whose writings fill twenty thick volumes, was a favourite son until he joined the humble Dominican Order. Angered, his mother, the haughty, high-born countess Theodora, shut him up in a tower of the family castle at Rocca-Secca; no son of hers should become a "begging friar." But Thomas escaped from his prison in a basket which friends lowered down the steep castle walls, and rejoined his Order.

as they did first to the convent of St Sabina in Rome, and soon after to Paris, out of the reach of his relations. Two of his brothers, Landulph and Reynold, commanders in the emperor's army in Tuscany, by her direction so well guarded all the roads that he fell into their hands near Acqua-pendente. They endeavoured to pull off his habit, but he resisted them so violently that they conducted him in it to the seat of his parents, called Rocca-Secca. The mother, overjoyed at their success, made no doubt of overcoming her son's resolution. She endeavoured to persuade him that to embrace such an order against his parents' advice could not be the call of heaven; adding all manner of reasons, fond caresses, entreaties, and tears. Nature made her eloquent and pathetic. He appeared sensible of her affliction, but his constancy was not to be shaken. His answers were modest and respectful, but firm in showing his resolution to be the call of God, and ought consequently to take place of all other views whatsoever, even for his service any other way. At last, offended at his unexpected resistance, she expressed her displeasure in very cholerick words, and ordered him to be more closely confined and guarded, and that no one should see him but his two sisters. The reiterated solicitations of the young ladies were a long and violent assault. They omitted nothing that flesh and blood could inspire on such an occasion, and represented to him the danger of causing the death of his mother by grief. He, on the contrary, spoke to them in so moving a manner on the contempt of the world, and the love of virtue, that they both yielded to the force of his reasons for his quitting the world, and, by his persuasion, devoted themselves to a sincere practice of piety.

This solitude furnished him with the most happy opportunity for holy contemplation and assiduous prayer. Some time after, his sisters conveyed to him some books, viz. a Bible, Aristotle's logics, and the works of the Master of the Sentences. During this interval his two brothers, Landulph and Reynold, returning home from the army, found their mother in the greatest affliction, and the young novice triumphant in his resolution. They would needs undertake to overcome him, and began their assault by shutting him up in a tower of the castle. They tore in pieces his habit on his back, and after bitter reproaches and dreadful threats, they left him, hoping his confinement and the mortifications every one strove to give him would shake his resolution. This not succeeding, the devil suggested to these two young officers a new artifice for diverting him from pursuing his vocation. They secretly introduced one of the most beautiful and most insinuating young strumpets of the country into his chamber, promising her a considerable reward in case she could draw him into sin. She employed all the arms of Satan to succeed in so detestable a design. The saint, alarmed and affrighted at the danger, profoundly humbled himself, and cried out to God most earnestly for



his protection; then snatching up a firebrand, struck her with it, and drove her out of his chamber. After this victory, not moved with pride, but blushing with confusion for having been so basely assaulted, he fell on his knees and thanked God for his merciful preservation, consecrated to him anew his chastity, and redoubled his prayers, and the earnest cry of his heart with sighs and tears, to obtain the grace of being always faithful to his promises. Then falling into a slumber, as the most ancient historians of his life relate,<sup>1</sup> he was visited by two angels, who seemed to gird him round the waist with a cord so tight that it awaked him, and made him to cry out. His guards ran in, but he kept his secret to himself. It was only a little before his death that he disclosed this incident to F. Reynold, his confessor, adding that he had received this favour about thirty years before, from which time he had never been annoyed with temptations of the flesh; yet he constantly used the utmost caution and watchfulness against that enemy, and he would otherwise have deserved to forfeit that grace. One heroic victory sometimes obtains of God a recompense and triumph of this kind. Our saint having suffered in silence this imprisonment and persecution upwards of a twelvemonth, some say two years, at length, on the remonstrances of Pope Innocent IV and the Emperor Frederick, on account of so many acts of violence in his regard, both the countess and his brothers began to relent. The Dominicans of Naples being informed of this, and that his mother was disposed to connive at measures that might be taken to procure his escape, they hastened in disguise to Rocca-Secca, where his sister, knowing that the countess no longer opposed his escape, contrived his being let down out of his tower in a basket. He was received by his brethren in their arms, and carried with joy to Naples. The year following he there made his profession, looking on that day as the happiest of his whole life in which he made a sacrifice of his liberty that he might belong to God alone. But his mother and brothers renewed their complaints to Pope Innocent IV, who sent for Thomas to Rome, and examined him on the subject of his vocation to the state of religion, in their presence; and having received entire satisfaction on this head, the pope admired his virtue, and approved of his choice of that state of life, which from that time he was suffered to pursue in peace. Albertus Magnus, teaching then at Cologne, the general, John the Teutonic, took the saint with him from Rome to Paris, and thence to Cologne. Thomas gave all his time which was not employed in devotion and other duties to his studies, retrenching part of that which was allowed for his meals and sleep, not out of a vain passion, or the desire of applause, but for the advancement of God's honour and the interests of religion, according to what he himself teaches.<sup>2</sup> His humility made him conceal his progress and deep

<sup>1</sup> Gul. Tocco. Bern. Guid. Antonin. Malvend.

<sup>2</sup> 2. 2dæ. q. 188, a. 5.

penetration, insomuch that his school-fellows thought he learned nothing, and on account of his silence called him the Dumb Ox and the Great Sicilian Ox. But the brightness of his genius, his quick and deep penetration and learning were at last discovered, in spite of all his endeavours to conceal them: for his master, Albertus, having propounded to him several questions on the most knotty and obscure points, his answers, which the duty of obedience extorted, astonished the audience; and Albertus, not able to contain his joy and admiration, said, "We call him the Dumb Ox, but he will give such a bellow in learning as will be heard all over the world." This applause made no impression on the humble saint. He continued the same in simplicity, modesty, silence, and recollection, because his heart was the same; equally insensible to praises and humiliations, full of nothing but of God and his own insufficiency, never reflecting on his own qualifications, or on what was the opinion of others concerning him. In his first year, under Albertus Magnus, he wrote comments on Aristotle's Ethics. The general chapter of the Dominicans, held at Cologne in 1245, deputed Albertus to teach at Paris, in their College of St James, which the university had given them; and it is from that college they are called in France Jacobins. St Thomas was sent with him to continue his studies there. His school exercises did not interrupt his prayer. By an habitual sense of the divine presence, and devout aspirations, he kept his heart continually raised to God; and in difficult points redoubled with more earnestness his fervour in his prayers than his application to study. This he found attended with such success that he often said that he had learned less by books than before his crucifix or at the foot of the altar. His constant attention to God always filled his soul with joy, which appeared in his very countenance, and made his conversation altogether heavenly. He was so perfectly mortified, and dead to his senses, that he ate without reflecting either on the kind or quality of his food, so that after meals he often knew not what he had been eating.

In the year 1248, being twenty-two years of age, he was appointed by the general chapter to teach at Cologne, together with his old master Albertus, whose high reputation he equalled in his very first lessons. He then also began to publish his first works, which consist of comments on the Ethics, and other philosophical works of Aristotle. No one was more courteous and affable, but it was his principle to shun all unnecessary visits. To prepare himself for holy orders he redoubled his watchings, prayer, and other spiritual exercises. His devotion to the blessed sacrament was extraordinary. He spent several hours of the day, and part of the night, before the altar, humbling himself in acts of profound adoration, and melting with love in contemplation of the immense charity of that Man-God, whom he there adored. In saying mass he

seemed to be in raptures, and often quite dissolved in tears; a glowing frequently appeared in his eyes and countenance, which showed the ardour with which his heart burnt within him. His devotion was most fervent during the precious moments after he had received the divine mysteries; and after saying mass he usually served at another, or at least heard one. This fire and zeal appeared also in his sermons, at Cologne, Paris, Rome, and in other cities of Italy. He was everywhere heard as an angel: even the Jews ran of their own accord to hear him, and many of them were converted. His zeal made him solicitous, in the first place, for the salvation of his relations. His example and exhortations induced them to an heroic practice of piety. His eldest sister consecrated herself to God in St Mary's at Capua, and died abbess of that monastery: the younger, Theodora, married the Count of Marsico, and lived and died in great virtue; as did his mother. His two brothers, Landulph and Reynold, became sincere penitents. St Thomas, after teaching four years at Cologne, was sent in 1252 to Paris. His reputation for perspicuity and solidity drew immediately to his school a great number of auditors: St Thomas, with great reluctancy, compelled by holy obedience, consented to be admitted doctor, on the 23rd of October, in 1257, being then thirty-one years old. The professors of the University of Paris being divided about the question of the accidents remaining really, or only in appearance, in the blessed sacrament of the altar, they agreed, in 1258, to consult our saint. The young doctor, not puffed up by such an honour, applied himself first to God by prayer, then he wrote upon that question the treatise still extant, and, carrying it to the church, laid it on the altar. The most ancient author of his life assures us, that while the saint remained in prayer on that occasion, some of the brethren who were present saw him raised a little above the ground.<sup>1</sup>

The holy king, St Louis, had so great an esteem for St Thomas that he consulted him in affairs of state, and ordinarily informed him, the evening before, of any affair of importance that was to be treated of in council, that he might be the more ready to give advice on the point. The saint avoided the honour of dining with the king as often as he could excuse himself; and, when obliged to assist at court, appeared there as recollected as in his convent. One day at the king's table the saint cried out, "The argument is conclusive against the Manichees."<sup>2</sup> His prior being with him, bade him remember where he was. The saint would have asked the king's pardon, but that good prince, fearing he should forget the argument that had occurred to his mind, caused his secretary to write it down for him. In the year 1259 St Thomas assisted at the thirty-sixth general chapter of his order, held at Valenciennes,

<sup>1</sup> Gul. Tocco.

<sup>2</sup> Conclusum est contra Manichæos.

which deputed him, in conjunction with Albertus Magnus and three others, to draw up rules for studies, which are still extant in the acts of that chapter. In 1261, Urban IV called St Thomas to Rome, and, by his order, the general appointed him to teach here. The pope, however, obliged him always to attend his person. Thus it happened that the saint taught and preached in all the towns where that pope ever resided, as in Rome, Viterbo, Orvieto, Fondi, and Perugia. He also taught at Bologna, Naples, etc.

The fruits of his preaching were no less wonderful than those of his pen. Whilst he was preaching on Good Friday on the love of God for man, and our ingratitude to him, his whole auditory melted into tears to such a degree that he was obliged to stop several times that they might recover themselves. His discourse on the following Sunday, concerning the glory of Christ, and the happiness of those who rise with him by grace, was no less pathetic and affecting. William of Tocco adds, that as the saint was coming out of St Peter's Church the same day, a woman was cured of the bloody flux by touching the hem of his garment. The conversion of two considerable Rabbins seemed still a greater miracle. St Thomas had held a long conference with them at a casual meeting in Cardinal Richard's villa, and they agreed to resume it the next day. The saint spent the foregoing night in prayer at the foot of the altar. The next morning these two most obstinate Jews came to him of their own accord, not to dispute, but to embrace the faith, and were followed by many others. In the year 1263 the Dominicans held their fortieth general chapter in London. The first part of his theological Summ, St Thomas composed at Bologna: he was called thence to Naples. Here it was that, according to Tocco and others, Dominick Caserte beheld him, while in fervent prayer, raised from the ground, and heard a voice from the crucifix directed to him in these words: "Thou hast written well of me, Thomas; what recompense dost thou desire?" He answered, "No other than thyself, O Lord."

From the 6th of December in 1273 to the 7th of March following, the day of his death, he neither dictated nor wrote anything on theological matters. He from that time laid aside his studies to fix his thoughts and heart entirely on eternity, and to aspire with the greatest ardour and most languishing desires to the enjoyment of God in perfect love. Pope Gregory X had called a general council, the second of Lyons, with the view of extinguishing the Greek schism, and raising succours to defend the holy land against the Saracens. The ambassadors of the Emperor Michael Palæologus, together with the Greek prelates, were to assist at it. The council was to meet on the 1st of May, in 1274. His holiness, by brief directed to our saint, ordered him to repair thither, and to prepare himself to defend the catholic cause against the Greek schismatics.

Though indisposed, he set out from Naples about the end of January. His dear friend, F. Reynold of Piperno, was appointed his companion, and ordered to take care that he did not neglect himself, which the saint was apt to do. St Thomas on the road called at the Castle of Magenza, the seat of his niece Francisca of Aquino, married to the Count of Cekan. Here his distemper increased; this, however, did not hinder him from proceeding on his journey till, his fever increasing, he was forced to stop at Fossa-Nuova, a famous abbey of the Cistercians, in the diocese of Terracina, where formerly stood the city called Forum Appii. Entering the monastery, he went first to pray before the blessed sacrament, according to his custom. He poured forth his soul with extraordinary fervour, in the presence of Him who now called him to his kingdom. Passing thence into the cloister, which he never lived to go out of, he repeated these words: "This is my rest for ages without end."<sup>1</sup> He was lodged in the abbot's apartment, where he lay ill for near a month. The good monks treated him with uncommon veneration and esteem, and as if he had been an angel from heaven. They would not employ any of their servants about him, but chose to serve him themselves in the meanest offices, as in cutting or carrying wood for him to burn, &c. His patience, humility, constant recollection, and prayer were equally their astonishment and edification.

The nearer he saw himself to the term of all his desires, the entering into the joy of his Lord, the more tender and inflamed were his longings after death. He had continually in his mouth these words of St Austin,<sup>2</sup> "Then shall I truly live, when I shall be quite filled with you alone, and your love; now I am a burden to myself, because I am not entirely full of you." In such pious transports of heavenly love he never ceased sighing after the glorious day of eternity. The monks begged he would dictate an exposition of the Book of Canticles, in imitation of St Bernard. He answered, "Give me St Bernard's spirit, and I will obey." But at last, to renounce perfectly his own will, he dictated the exposition of that most mysterious of all the divine books. It begins, "Solomon inspiratus." It is not what his erudition might have suggested, but what love inspired him with in his last moments, when his pure soul was hastening to break the chains of mortality, and drown itself in the ocean of God's immensity, and in the delights of eternity. The holy doctor at last finding himself too weak to dictate any more, begged the religious to withdraw, recommending himself to their prayers, and desiring their leave to employ the few precious moments he had to live with God alone. He accordingly spent them in fervent acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, humility, and repentance. He made a general confession of his whole life to F. Reynold, with abundance of tears for his imperfections

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxxxi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Conf. lib. x. c. 28

and sins of frailty; for in the judgment of those to whom he had manifested his interior, he had never offended God by any mortal sin. And he said to F. Reynold, before his death, that he thanked God with his whole heart for having prevented him with his grace, and always conducted him as it were by the hand, and preserved him from any known sin that destroys charity in the soul; adding, that this was purely God's mercy, to which he was indebted for his preservation from every sin which he had not committed. Having received absolution in the sentiments of the most perfect penitent, he desired the Viaticum. Whilst the abbot and community were preparing to bring it, he begged to be taken off his bed, and laid upon ashes spread upon the floor. Thus lying on the ground, weak in body but vigorous in mind, he waited for the priest with tears of the most tender devotion. When he saw the host in the priest's hand, he said, "I firmly believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is present in this august sacrament. I adore you, my God, and my Redeemer: I receive You, the price of my redemption, the Viaticum of my pilgrimage; for whose honour I have studied, laboured, preached, and taught. I hope I never advanced any tenet as your word which I had not learned from you. If through ignorance I have done otherwise, I revoke everything of that kind, and submit all my writings to the judgment of the holy Roman Church." Then recollecting himself, after other acts of faith, adoration, and love, he received the holy Viaticum; but remained on the ashes till he had finished his thanksgiving. Growing still weaker, amidst his transports of love, he desired extreme unction, which he received, answering himself to all the prayers. After this, he lay in peace and joy, as appeared by the serenity of his countenance; and he was heard to pronounce these aspirations: "Soon, soon will the God of all comfort complete his mercies on me, and fill all my desires. I shall shortly be satiated in him, and drink of the torrent of his delights: be inebriated from the abundance of his house, and in him who is the source of life I shall behold the true light." Seeing all in tears about him he comforted them, saying, Death was his gain and his joy. F. Reynold said he had hoped to see him triumph over the adversaries of the church in the council of Lyons, and placed in a rank in which he might do it some signal service. The saint answered, "I have begged of God, as the greatest favour, to die a simple religious man, and I now thank him for it. It is a greater benefit than he has granted to many of his holy servants, that he is pleased to call me out of this world so early to enter into his joy; wherefore grieve not for me who am overwhelmed with joy." He returned thanks to the abbot and monks of Fossa-Nuova for their charity to him. One of the community asked him by what means we might live always faithful to God's grace. He answered, "Be assured that he who shall always walk faithfully in his presence—always ready to

give him an account of all his actions—shall never be separated from him by consenting to sin.” These were his last words to men, after which he only spoke to God in prayer, and gave up the ghost, on the 7th of March, in 1274, a little after midnight: some say in the fiftieth year of his age; but Ptolemy of Lucca, and other contemporary authors, say expressly in his forty-eighth, which also agrees with his whole history. He was very tall, and every way proportioned.

The concourse of people at the saint's funeral was extraordinary: several monks of that house, and many other persons, were cured by his relics and intercession, of which many instances, judicially proved, are mentioned by William of Tocco, in the bull of his canonization, and other authors. The Bollandists give us other long authentic relations of the like miracles continued afterwards, especially in the translations of those holy relics. The University of Paris sent to the general and provincial of the Dominicans a letter of condolence upon his death, giving the highest commendations to the saint's learning and sanctity, and begging the treasure of his holy body. Naples, Rome, and many other universities, princes, and orders contended no less for it. One of his hands, uncorrupt, was cut off in 1288, and given to his sister, the Countess Theodora, who kept it in her domestic chapel of San Severino. After her death it was given to the Dominicans' convent of Salerno. After several contestations, Pope Urban V, many years after his death, granted his body to the Dominicans to carry to Paris or Toulouse, as Italy already possessed the body of St Dominic at Bologna. The sacred treasure was carried privately into France, and received at Toulouse in the most honourable manner: one hundred and fifty thousand people came to meet and conduct it into the city, having at their head Louis, Duke of Anjou, brother to King Charles V, the archbishops of Toulouse and Narbonne, and many bishops, abbots, and noblemen. It rests now in the Dominicans' church at Toulouse, in a rich shrine, with a stately mausoleum over it, which reaches almost up to the roof of the church, and hath four ces. An arm of the saint was at the same time sent to the great convent of the Dominicans at Paris, and placed in St Thomas's chapel in their church, which the king declared a royal chapel. The faculty of theology meets to assist at a high mass there on the anniversary festival of the saint. The kingdom of Naples, after many pressing solicitations, obtained, in 1372, from the general chapter held at Toulouse, a bone of the other arm of St Thomas. It was kept in the church of the Dominicans at Naples till 1603, when the city being delivered from a public calamity by his intercession, it was placed in the metropolitan church among the relics of the other patrons of the country. That kingdom by the briefs of Pius V in 1567, and of Clement VIII in 1603, confirmed by Paul V, honours him as a principal patron. He was solemnly

canonized by Pope John XXII in 1323. Pope Pius V, in 1567, commanded his festival and office to be kept equal with those of the four doctors of the western church.

Many in their studies, as in other occupations, take great pains to little purpose, often to draw from them the poison of vanity or error; or at least to drain their affections, and rather to nourish pride and other vices in the heart than to promote true virtue. Sincere humility and simplicity of heart are essential conditions for the sanctification of studies, and for the improvement of virtue by them. Prayer must also both go before and accompany them. St Thomas spoke much to God by prayer, that God might speak to him by enlightening his understanding in his reading and studies; and he received in this what he asked in the other exercise. This prodigy of human wit, this unparalleled genius, which penetrated the most knotty difficulties in all the sciences, whether sacred or profane, to which he applied himself, was accustomed to say that he learned more at the foot of the crucifix than in books. We ought never to set ourselves to read or study anything without having first made our morning meditation, and without imploring in particular the divine light in everything we read; and seasoning our studies by frequent aspirations to God in them, and by keeping our souls in an humble attention to his presence. In intricate difficulties we ought more earnestly prostrate at the foot of a crucifix, to ask of Christ the resolution of our doubts. We should thus receive, in the school of so good a master, that science which makes saints, by giving, with other sciences, the true knowledge of God and ourselves, and purifying and kindling in the will the fire of divine love with the sentiments of humility and other virtues. Prayer and true virtue even naturally conduce to the perfection of learning, in every branch; for purity of the heart, and the disengagement of the affections from all irregular passions, render the understanding clear, qualify the mind to judge impartially of truth in its researches, divest it of many prejudices, the fatal sources of errors, and inspire a modest distrust in a person's own abilities and lights. Thus virtue and learning mutually assist and improve each other.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 7:*

BLESSED GERMAN GARDINER, BLESSED JOHN IRELAND, and BLESSED JOHN LARKE, sometime rector of Chelsea and the parish priest of St Thomas More, three priests martyred under Elizabeth: ST PAUL, anchorite, surnamed "The Simple," who served God in a poor and toilsome life, being drawn to heavenly things through the unworthiness of his wife: SAINTS PERPETUA and FELICITAS, martyred with their companions; a truly heroic group, martyred in Africa in 203: and ST THOMAS AQUINO.



MARCH 8

ST JOHN OF GOD, CONFESSOR, FOUNDER OF THE  
ORDER OF CHARITY

(A.D. 1550)

[From his life, written by Francis de Castro, twenty-five years after his death, abridged by Baillet, p. 92, and F. Helyot, *Hist. des Ordres Relig.* t. iv. p. 131.]

ST JOHN, surnamed of God, was born in Portugal in 1495. His parents were of the lowest rank in the country, but devout and charitable. John spent a considerable part of his youth in service, under the mayoral or chief shepherd of the Count of Oropesa in Castile, and in great innocence and virtue. In 1522, he listed himself in a company of foot raised by the count, and served in the wars between the French and Spaniards; as he did afterwards in Hungary against the Turks whilst the Emperor Charles V was king of Spain. By the licentiousness of his companions he, by degrees, lost his fear of offending God, and laid aside the greatest part of his practices of devotion. The troop which he belonged to being disbanded, he went into Andalusia in 1536, where he entered the service of a rich lady near Seville, in quality of shepherd. Being now about forty years of age, stung with remorse for his past misconduct, he began to entertain very serious thoughts of a change of life, and doing penance for his sins. He accordingly employed the greatest part of his time, both by day and night, in the exercises of prayer and mortification; bewailing almost continually his ingratitude towards God, and deliberating how he could dedicate himself in the most perfect manner to his service. His compassion for the distressed moved him to take a resolution of leaving his place, and passing into Africa, that he might comfort and succour the poor slaves there, not without hopes of meeting with the crown of martyrdom. At Gibraltar he met with a Portuguese gentleman condemned to banishment, and whose estate had also been confiscated by King John III. He was then in the hands of the king's officers, together with his wife and children, and on his way to Ceuta in Barbary, the place of his exile. John, out of charity and compassion, served him without any wages. At Ceuta, the gentleman falling sick with grief and the change of air, was soon reduced to such straits as to be obliged to dispose of the small remains of his shattered fortune for the family's support. John, not content to sell what little stock he was master of to relieve them, went to day-labour at the public works, to earn all he could for their subsistence. The apostacy of one of his companions alarmed him; and his confessor telling him that his going in quest of martyrdom was an illusion, he determined to return to Spain. Coming back to Gibraltar, his piety suggested to him to turn pedler, and sell little pictures and

books of devotion, which might furnish him with opportunities of exhorting his customers to virtue. His stock increasing considerably, he settled in Granada, where he opened a shop in 1538, being then forty-three years of age.

The great preacher and servant of God, John D'Avila, surnamed the Apostle of Andalusia, preached that year at Granada, on St Sebastian's day, which is there kept as a great festival. John, having heard his sermon, was so affected with it that, melting into tears, he filled the whole church with his cries and lamentations; detesting his past life, beating his breast, and calling aloud for mercy. Not content with this, he ran about the streets like a distracted person, tearing his hair, and behaving in such a manner that he was followed everywhere by the rabble with sticks and stones, and came home all besmeared with dirt and blood. He then gave away all he had in the world, and having thus reduced himself to absolute poverty, that he might die to himself, and crucify all the sentiments of the old man, he began again to counterfeit the madman, running about the streets as before, till some had the charity to take him to the venerable John D'Avila, covered with dirt and blood. The holy man, full of the Spirit of God, soon discovered in John the motions of extraordinary graces, spoke to him in private, heard his general confession, and gave him proper advice, and promised his assistance ever after. John, out of a desire of the greatest humiliations, returned soon after to his apparent madness and extravagances. He was, thereupon, taken up and put into a madhouse, on supposition of his being disordered in his senses, where the severest methods were used to bring him to himself, all which he underwent in the spirit of penance, and by way of atonement for the sins of his past life. D'Avila, being informed of his conduct, came to visit him, and found him reduced almost to the grave by weakness, and his body covered with wounds and sores; but his soul was still vigorous, and thirsting with the greatest ardour after new sufferings and humiliations. D'Avila, however, told him, that having now been sufficiently exercised in that so singular a method of penance and humiliation, he advised him to employ himself for the time to come in something more conducive to his own and the public good. His exhortation had its desired effect; and he grew instantly calm and sedate, to the great astonishment of his keepers. He continued, however, some time longer in the hospital, serving the sick, but left it entirely on St Ursula's day, in 1539. This his extraordinary conduct is an object of our admiration, not of our imitation: in this saint it was the effect of the fervour of his conversion, his desire of humiliation, and a holy hatred of himself and his past criminal life. By it he learned in a short time perfectly to die to himself and the world; which prepared his soul for the graces which God afterwards bestowed on him. He then thought of executing his

design of doing something for the relief of the poor; and, after a pilgrimage to our Lady's in Guadaloupa, to recommend himself and his undertaking to her intercession, in a place celebrated for devotion to her, he began by selling wood in the market-place, to feed some poor by the means of his labour. Soon after he hired a house to harbour poor sick persons in, whom he served and provided for with an ardour, prudence, economy, and vigilance that surprised the whole city. This was the foundation of the order of charity, in 1540, which, by the benediction of heaven, has since been spread all over Christendom. John was occupied all day in serving his patients: in the night he went out to carry in new objects of charity, rather than to seek out provisions for them; for people, of their own accord, brought him in all necessaries for his little hospital. The Archbishop of Granada, taking notice of so excellent an establishment, and admiring the incomparable order observed in it, both for the spiritual and temporal care of the poor, furnished considerable sums to increase it, and favoured it with his protection. This excited all persons to vie with each other in contributing to it. Indeed the charity, patience, and modesty of St John, and his wonderful care and foresight, engaged every one to admire and favour the institute. The Bishop of Tuy, president of the royal court of judicature in Granada, having invited the holy man to dinner, put several questions to him, to all which he answered in such a manner as gave the bishop the highest esteem of his person. It was this prelate that gave him the name of John of God, and prescribed him a kind of habit, though St John never thought of founding a religious order; for the rules which bear his name were only drawn up in 1556, six years after his death; and religious vows were not introduced among his brethren before the year 1570.

To make trial of the saint's disinterestedness, the Marquis of Tarisa came to him in disguise to beg an alms, on pretence of a necessary lawsuit, and he received from his hands twenty-five ducats, which was all he had. The marquis was so much edified by his charity that, besides returning the sum, he bestowed on him one hundred and fifty crowns of gold, and sent to his hospital every day, during his stay at Granada, one hundred and fifty loaves, four sheep, and six pullets. But the holy man gave a still more illustrious proof of his charity when the hospital was on fire; for he carried out most of the sick on his own back; and though he passed and repassed through the flames, and stayed in the midst of them a considerable time, he received no hurt. But his charity was not confined to his own hospital: he looked upon it as his own misfortune if the necessities of any distressed person in the whole country had remained unrelieved. He therefore made strict inquiry into the wants of the poor over the whole province, relieved many in their own houses, employed in a proper manner those that were able to work, and with

wonderful sagacity laid himself out every way to comfort and assist all the afflicted members of Christ. He was particularly active and vigilant in settling and providing for young maidens in distress, to prevent the danger to which they are often exposed, of taking bad courses. He also reclaimed many who were already engaged in vice; for which purpose he sought out public sinners, and holding a crucifix in his hand, with many tears exhorted them to repentance. Though his life seemed to be taken up in continual action, he accompanied it with perpetual prayer and incredible corporal austerities. And his tears of devotion, his frequent raptures, and his eminent spirit of contemplation, gave a lustre to his other virtues. But his sincere humility appeared most admirable in all his actions, even amidst the honours which he received at the court of Valladolid, whither business called him. The king and princes seemed to vie with each other who should show him the greatest courtesy, or put the largest alms in his hands; whose charitable contributions he employed with great prudence in Valladolid itself and the adjacent country. Only perfect virtue could stand the test of honours, amidst which he appeared the most humble. Humiliations seemed to be his delight: these he courted and sought, and always underwent them with great alacrity. One day, when a woman called him hypocrite, and loaded him with invectives, he gave her privately a piece of money, and desired her to repeat all she had said in the market-place.

Worn out at last by ten years' hard service in his hospital, he fell sick. He at first concealed his sickness, that he might not be obliged to diminish his labours and extraordinary austerities; but in the mean time he carefully revised the inventories of all things belonging to his hospital, and inspected all the accounts. He also reviewed all the excellent regulations which he had made for its administration, the distribution of time, and the exercises of piety to be observed in it. Upon a complaint that he harboured idle strollers and bad women, the archbishop sent for him, and laid open the charge against him. The man of God threw himself prostrate at his feet, and said, "The Son of God came for sinners, and we are obliged to promote their conversion, to exhort them, and to sigh and pray for them. I am unfaithful to my vocation because I neglect this; and I confess that I know no other bad person in my hospital but myself; who, as I am obliged to own with extreme confusion, am a most base sinner, altogether unworthy to eat the bread of the poor." This he spoke with so much feeling and humility that all present were much moved, and the archbishop dismissed him with respect, leaving all things to his discretion. His illness increasing, the news of it was spread abroad. The Lady Anne Ossorio was no sooner informed of his condition but she came in her coach to the hospital to see him. The servant of God lay in his habit in his little cell, covered with a piece of an old coat instead

of a blanket, and having under his head, not indeed a stone, as was his custom, but a basket, in which he used to beg alms in the city for his hospital. The poor and sick stood weeping round him. The lady, moved with compassion, despatched secretly a message to the archbishop, who sent immediately an order to St John to obey her as he would do himself, during his illness. By virtue of this authority she obliged him to leave his hospital. He named Antony Martin superior in his place, and gave moving instructions to his brethren, recommending to them in particular obedience and charity. In going out he visited the blessed sacrament, and poured forth his heart before it with extraordinary fervour; remaining there absorbed in his devotions so long that the Lady Anne Ossorio caused him to be taken up and carried into her coach, in which she conveyed him to her own house. She herself prepared with the help of her maids, and gave him with her own hands, his broths and other things, and often read to him the history of the passion of our divine Redeemer. He complained that whilst our Saviour, in his agony, drank gall, they gave him, a miserable sinner, broths. The whole city was in tears; all the nobility visited him; the magistrates came to beg he would give his benediction to their city. He answered that his sins rendered him the scandal and reproach of their country; but recommended to them his brethren, the poor, and his religious that served them. At last, by order of the archbishop, he gave the city his dying benediction. His exhortations to all were most pathetic. His prayer consisted of most humble sentiments of compunction and inflamed aspirations of divine love. The archbishop said mass in his chamber, heard his confession, gave him the viaticum and extreme unction, and promised to pay all his debts and to provide for all his poor. The saint expired on his knees, before the altar, on the 8th of March, in 1550, being exactly fifty-five years old. He was buried by the archbishop at the head of all the clergy, both secular and regular, accompanied by all the court, noblesse, and city, with the utmost pomp. He was honoured by many miracles, beatified by Urban VIII in 1630, and canonized by Alexander VIII in 1690. His relics were translated into the church of his brethren in 1664. His order of charity to serve the sick was approved of by Pope Pius V. The Spaniards have their own general, but the religious in France and Italy obey a general who resides at Rome. They follow the rule of St Austin.

One sermon perfectly converted one who had been long enslaved to the world and his passions, and made him a saint. How comes it that so many sermons and pious books produce so little fruit in our souls? It is altogether owing to our sloth and wilful hardness of heart that we receive God's omnipotent word in vain, and to our most grievous condemnation. To animate ourselves to fervour, we may often call to mind

what St John frequently repeated to his disciples, "Labour without intermission to do all the good works in your power, whilst time is allowed you." His spirit of penance, love, and fervour he inflamed by meditating assiduously on the sufferings of Christ, of which he often used to say:<sup>1</sup> "Lord, thy thorns are my roses, and thy sufferings my paradise."

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 8:*

ST APOLLONIUS, ST PHILEMON, and their companions, martyred in Egypt. The first was a holy hermit and the second a famous physician converted owing to the meekness of Apollonius: ST DUTHAK, a devout lover of God and of the poor, who passed joyfully to his rest in 1253: ST FELIX, a holy bishop in Dunwich, Suffolk. Founder of many schools. Some have called him the founder of the University of Cambridge. Pressed into the army by the people of the East Angles to defend them against King Penda, he carried nothing but a staff in his hand. Slain in 642, he is honoured as a martyr in the English calendars: ST JOHN OF AVILA, the spiritual father of many eminent saints in Spain in the sixteenth century: ST JOHN OF GOD: ST JULIAN, Abbot of Toledo, who died in 690: ST PSALMOD, anchorite: ST ROSE OF VITERBO, who had a gift of converting very hardened sinners. She lived and died in her father's house: and ST SENAN, an Irish abbot and bishop, who loved St David and died on the same day as his friend.

### MARCH 9

## ST FRANCES, WIDOW, FOUNDESS OF THE COLLATINES

(A.D. 1440)

[Abridged from her life by her confessor, Canon Mattiotti; and that by Magdalen Dell' Anguillara, superioress of the Oblates, or Collatines. Helyot, *Hist. des Ord. Mont. t. vi. p. 208.*]

ST FRANCES was born at Rome in 1384. Her parents, Paul de Buxo and Jacobella Rofredeschi, were both of illustrious families. She imbibed early sentiments of piety, and such was her love of purity from her tender age that she would not suffer her own father to touch even her hands, unless covered. She had always an aversion to the amusements of children, and loved solitude and prayer. At eleven years of age she desired to enter a monastery, but in obedience to her parents was married to a rich young Roman nobleman, named Laurence Ponzani, in 1396. A grievous sickness showed how disagreeable this kind of life was to her inclinations. She joined with it her former spirit; kept herself as retired as she could, shunning feasting and public meetings. All her delight was in prayer, meditation, and visiting churches. Above all, her obedience and condescension to her husband was inimitable, which engaged such a return of affection that for the forty years which they lived together there never happened the least disagreement; and their whole life was a constant strife and emulation to prevent each other in mutual complaisance and respect. Whilst she was at her prayers or other exercises, if called away by her husband, or the meanest person of her family, she laid all aside to obey without delay, saying, "A married woman must, when called upon, quit her devotions to God at the altar to find him in her household affairs." God was pleased to show her the merit of this her obedience;

<sup>1</sup> Pope Leo XIII made St John of God patron of Catholic hospitals and the sick everywhere.

for the authors of her life relate, that being called away four times in beginning the same verse of a psalm in our Lady's office, returning the fifth time, she found that verse written in golden letters. She treated her domestics not as servants, but as brothers and sisters, and future co-heirs in heaven; and studied by all means in her power to induce them seriously to labour for their salvation. Her mortifications were extraordinary, especially when, some years before her husband's death, she was permitted by him to inflict on her body what hardships she pleased. She from that time abstained from wine, fish, and dainty meats, with a total abstinence from flesh, unless in her greatest sicknesses. Her ordinary diet was hard and mouldy bread. She would procure secretly, out of the pouches of the beggars, their dry crusts in exchange for better bread. When she fared the best, she only added to bread a few unsavoury herbs without oil, and drank nothing but water, making use of a human skull for her cup. She ate but once a day, and by long abstinence had lost all relish of what she took. Her garments were of coarse serge, and she never wore linen, not even in sickness. Her discipline was armed with rowels and sharp points. She wore continually a hair shirt and a girdle of horse-hair. An iron girdle had so galled her flesh that her confessor obliged her to lay it aside. If she inadvertently chanced to offend God in the least, she severely that instant punished the part that had offended; as the tongue by sharply biting it, &c. Her example was of such edification that many Roman ladies, having renounced a life of idleness, pomp, and softness, joined her in pious exercises, and put themselves under the direction of the Benedictin monks of the congregation of Monte-Oliveto, without leaving the world, making vows, or wearing any particular habit. St Frances prayed only for children that they might be citizens of heaven, and when she was blessed with them it was her whole care to make them saints.

It pleased God, for her sanctification, to make trial of her virtue by many afflictions. During the troubles which ensued upon the invasion of Rome by Ladislas, King of Naples, and the great schism under Pope John XXIII at the time of opening the Council of Constance, in 1413, her husband, with his brother-in-law Paulucci, was banished Rome, his estate confiscated, his house pulled down, and his eldest son, John Baptist, detained as hostage. Her soul remained calm amidst all those storms: she said with Job, "God hath given, and God hath taken away. I rejoice in these losses, because they are God's will. Whatever he sends I shall continually bless and praise his name for." The schism being extinguished by the Council of Constance, and tranquillity restored at Rome, her husband recovered his dignity and estate. Some time after, moved by the great favours St Frances received from heaven, and by her eminent virtue, he gave her full leave to live as she pleased; and he himself chose

to serve God in a state of continency. He permitted her in his own lifetime to found a monastery of nuns, called Oblates, for the reception of such of her own sex as were disposed to embrace a religious life. The foundation of this house was in 1425. She gave them the rule of St Benedict, adding some particular constitutions of her own, and put them under the direction of the congregation of the Olivetans. The house being too small for the numbers that fled to this sanctuary from the corruption of the world, she would gladly have removed her community to a larger house; but not finding one suitable, she enlarged it in 1433, from which year the founding of the order is dated. It was approved by Pope Eugenius IV in 1437. They are called Collatines, perhaps from the quarter of Rome in which they are situated; and Oblates, because they call their profession an oblation, and use it in the word *offero*, not *profiteor*. St Frances could not yet join her new family; but as soon as she had settled her domestic affairs, after the death of her husband, she went barefoot, with a cord about her neck, to the monastery which she had founded, and there, prostrate on the ground before the religious, her spiritual children, begged to be admitted. She accordingly took the habit on St Benedict's day, in 1437. She always sought the meanest employments in the house, being fully persuaded she was of all the most contemptible before God; and she laboured to appear as mean in the eyes of the world as she was in her own. She continued the same humiliations, and the same universal poverty, though soon after chosen superioress of her congregation. Almighty God bestowed on her humility, extraordinary graces, and supernatural favours, as frequent visions, raptures, and the gift of prophecy. She enjoyed the familiar conversation of her angel-guardian, as her life and the process of her canonization attest. She was extremely affected by meditating on our Saviour's passion, which she had always present to her mind. At mass she was so absorbed in God as to seem immovable, especially after holy communion: she often fell into ecstasies of love and devotion. She was particularly devout to St John the Evangelist, and above all to our Lady, under whose singular protection she put her order. Going out to see her son John Baptist, who was dangerously sick, she felt so ill herself that she could not return to her monastery at night. After having foretold her death, and received the sacraments, she expired on the 9th of March, in the year 1440, and of her age the fifty-sixth. God attested her sanctity by miracles: she was honoured among the saints immediately after her death, and solemnly canonized by Paul V in 1608. Her shrine in Rome is most magnificent and rich: and her festival is kept as a holy-day in the city, with great solemnity. The Oblates make no solemn vows, only a promise of obedience to the mother-president, enjoy pensions, inherit estates, and go abroad with leave. Their abbey in Rome is filled with ladies of the first rank.



In a religious life, in which a regular distribution of holy employments and duties takes up the whole day, and leaves no interstices of time for idleness, sloth, or the world, hours pass in these exercises with the rapidity of moments, and moments by fervour of the desires bear the value of years. In a secular life, a person, by regularity in the employment of his time, and fervour in devoting himself to God in all his actions and designs, may in some degree enjoy the same happiness and advantage. This St Frances perfectly practised, even before she renounced the world. She lived forty years with her husband without ever giving him the least occasion of offence; and by the fervour with which she conversed of heaven, she seemed already to have quitted the earth, and to have made paradise her ordinary dwelling.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 9 :*

ST CATHERINE of Bologna, Abbess of the Poor Clares in that city, born 1413. She wrote some treatises in Latin, the principal being "On the Seven Spiritual Arms": ST FRANCES of Rome: ST GREGORY of Nyssa, a younger brother of St Basil the Great: and ST PACIAN, Bishop of Barcelona, an ornament of the Church in the fourth century.

MARCH 10

## THE FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE

(A.D. 320)

THESE holy martyrs suffered at Sebaste, in the Lesser Armenia, under the Emperor Licinius, in 320. They were of different countries, but enrolled in the same troop; all in the flower of their age, comely, brave, and robust, and were become considerable for their services. St Gregory of Nyssa and Procopius say they were of the Thundering Legion, so famous under Marcus Aurelius for the miraculous rain and victory obtained by their prayers. This was the twelfth legion, and then quartered in Armenia. Lysias was duke or general of the forces, and Agricola the governor of the province. The latter having signified to the army the orders of the emperor Licinius for all to sacrifice, these forty went boldly up to him, and said they were Christians, and that no torments should make them ever abandon their holy religion. The judge first endeavoured to gain them by mild usage; as by representing to them the dishonour that would attend their refusal to do what was required, and by making them large promises of preferment and high favour with the emperor in case of compliance. Finding these methods of gentleness ineffectual, he had recourse to threats, and these the most terrifying, if they continued disobedient to the emperor's order, but all in vain. To his promises they answered that he could give them nothing equal to what he would deprive them of; and to his threats, that his power only extended over their bodies, which they had learned to despise when their souls were at stake. The

governor, finding them all resolute, caused them to be torn with whips, and their sides to be rent with iron hooks; after which they were loaded with chains, and committed to jail.

After some days, Lysias, their general, coming from Cæsarea to Sebaste, they were re-examined, and no less generously rejected the large promises made them than they despised the torments they were threatened with. The governor, highly offended at their courage, and that liberty of speech with which they accosted him, devised an extraordinary kind of death, which, being slow and severe, he hoped would shake their constancy. The cold in Armenia is very sharp, especially in March, and towards the end of winter, when the wind is north, as it then was, it being also at that time a severe frost. Under the walls of the town stood a pond, which was frozen so hard that it would bear walking upon with safety. The judge ordered the saints to be exposed quite naked on the ice;<sup>1</sup> and in order to tempt them the more powerfully to renounce their faith, a warm bath was prepared at a small distance from the frozen pond, for any of this company to go to who were disposed to purchase their temporal ease and safety on that condition. The martyrs, on hearing their sentence, ran joyfully to the place, and without waiting to be stripped, undressed themselves, encouraging one another in the same manner as is usual among soldiers in military expeditions attended with hardships and dangers, saying that one bad night would purchase them a happy eternity.<sup>2</sup> They also made this their joint prayer: "Lord, we are forty who are engaged in this combat; grant that we may be forty crowned, and that not one be wanting to this sacred number." The guards in the mean time ceased not to persuade them to sacrifice, that by so doing they might be allowed to pass to the warm bath. But though it is not easy to form a just idea of the bitter pain they must have undergone, of the whole number only one had the misfortune to be overcome; who, losing courage, went off from the pond to seek the relief in readiness for such as were disposed to renounce their faith; but as the devil usually deceives his adorers, the apostate no sooner entered the warm water but he expired. This misfortune afflicted the martyrs; but they were quickly comforted by seeing his place and their number miraculously filled up. A sentinel was warming himself near the bath, having been posted there to observe if any of the martyrs were inclined to submit. While he was attending, he had a vision of blessed spirits descending from heaven on the martyrs, and distributing, as from their king, rich presents and precious garments; St Ephrem adds crowns to all these generous soldiers, one only excepted, who was their faint-hearted companion already mentioned. The guard,

<sup>1</sup> The acts, and the greater part of the writers of their lives, suppose they were to stand in the very water. But this is a circumstance which Tillemont, Baillie, Ruinart, Ceillier, and others correct from St Basil and St Gregory of Nyssa.

<sup>2</sup> St Gregory of Nyssa says that they endured three days and three nights this lingering death, which carried off their limbs one after another.

being struck with the celestial vision and the apostate's desertion, was converted upon it; and by a particular motion of the Holy Ghost, threw off his clothes, and placed himself in his stead amongst the thirty-nine martyrs. Thus God heard their request, though in another manner than they imagined: "Which ought to make us adore the impenetrable secrets of his mercy and justice," says St Ephrem, "in this instance, no less than in the reprobation of Judas and the election of St Matthias."

In the morning the judge ordered both those that were dead with the cold, and those that were still alive, to be laid on carriages, and cast into a fire. When the rest were thrown into a waggon to be carried to the pile, the youngest of them (whom the acts call Melito) was found alive; and the executioners, hoping he would change his resolution when he came to himself, left him behind. His mother, a woman of mean condition, and a widow, but rich in faith and worthy to have a son a martyr, observing this false compassion, reproached the executioners; and when she came up to her son, whom she found quite frozen, not able to stir, and scarce breathing, he looked on her with languishing eyes, and made a little sign with his weak hand to comfort her. She exhorted him to persevere to the end, and, fortified by the Holy Ghost, took him up, and put him with her own hands into the waggon with the rest of the martyrs, not only without shedding a tear, but with a countenance full of joy, saying courageously: "Go, go, son, proceed to the end of this happy journey with thy companions, that thou mayest not be the last of them that shall present themselves before God." Nothing can be more inflamed or more pathetic than the discourse which St Ephrem puts into her mouth, by which he expresses her contempt of life and all earthly things, and her ardent love and desire of eternal life. This holy father earnestly entreats her to conjure this whole troop of martyrs to join in imploring the divine mercy in favour of his sinful soul.<sup>1</sup> Their bodies were burned, and their ashes thrown into the river; but the Christians secretly carried off or purchased part of them with money. Some of these precious relics were kept in Cæsarea, and St Basil says of them: "Like bulwarks, they are our protection against the inroads of enemies." He adds that every one implored their succour, and that they raised up those that had fallen, strengthened the weak, and invigorated the fervour of the saints. SS Basil and Emmelia, the holy parents of St Basil the Great, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Peter of Sebaste, and St Macrina, procured a great share of these relics.<sup>2</sup> St Emmelia put some of them in the church she built near Anneses, the village where they resided. The solemnity with which they were received was extraordinary, and they were honoured by miracles, as St Gregory relates. One of these was a miraculous cure wrought on a lame soldier

<sup>1</sup> St Ephrem, Or. in 40 Mart. t. ii. Op. Gr. and Lat. 54, ed. Nov. Vatic. an. 1743.

<sup>2</sup> St Greg. Nyss. Or. 3, de 40 Mart. t. ii. pp. 212, 213.

the truth of which he attests from his own knowledge, both of the fact and the person who published it everywhere.

Though we are not all called to the trial of martyrdom, we are all bound daily to fight, and to conquer too. By multiplied victories which we gain over our passions and spiritual enemies, by the exercise of meekness, patience, humility, purity, and all other virtues, we shall render our triumph complete, and attain to the crown of bliss. But are we not confounded at our sloth in our spiritual warfare when we look on the conflicts of the martyrs? What shall we do in that terrible day when the holy martyrs, placed near the throne of God, with great confidence shall display their glorious scars, the proofs of their fidelity? What shall we then show? shall we produce our love for God? true faith? a disengagement of our affections from earthly things? souls freed from the tyranny of the passions? retirement and peace of mind? meekness? alms-deeds and compassion? holy and pure prayer? sincere compunction? watching and tears? Happy shall he be whom these works shall attend. He shall then be the companion of the martyrs, and shall appear with the same confidence before Christ and his angels. We beseech you, O most holy martyrs, who cheerfully suffered torments and death for his love, and are now more familiarly united to him, that you intercede with God for us slothful and wretched sinners, that he bestow on us the grace of Christ, by which we may be enlightened and enabled to love him."<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 10 :*

ST DROCTOVÆUS, first Abbot of St Germain-des-Prez, where he died in 590 : THE FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE : ST MACKESSOGE or Kessoge, Bishop in the Provinces of Lerin and Boin, in Scotland.

## MARCH 11

### ST EULOGIUS OF CORDOVA, PRIEST, MARTYR

(A.D. 859)

[From his authentic life by Alvarus, his intimate friend, and from his works, Bibl. Patr. t. ix. See Acta Sanct. t. vii. ; Fleury, b. 48, p. 57.]

ST EULOGIUS was of a senatorian family of Cordova, at that time the capital of the Moors or Saracens, in Spain. Those infidels had till then tolerated the Christian religion among the Goths, exacting only a certain tribute every new moon. Our saint was educated among the clergy of the church of St Zoilus, a martyr, who suffered at Cordova, with nineteen others, under Diocletian, and is honoured on the 27th of June. Here he distinguished himself by his virtue and learning; and being made priest, was placed at the head of the chief ecclesiastical school in Spain, which then flourished at Cordova. He joined assiduous watching, fasting, and prayer to his studies: and his humility, mildness, and charity gained him

<sup>1</sup> St Ephrem Homil. in SS Martyres, Op. Gr. and Lat. ed. Vat. an. 1743. t. ii. p. 341.

the affection and respect of every one. He often visited the monasteries for his further instruction in virtue, and prescribed rules of piety for the use of many fervent souls that desired to serve God. Some of the Christians were so indiscreet as openly to inveigh against Mahomet, and expose the religion established by him. This occasioned a bloody persecution at Cordova, in the twenty-ninth year of Abderrama III, the eight hundred and fiftieth year of Christ. Reccafred, an apostate bishop, declared against the martyrs; and, at his solicitation, the Bishop of Cordova and some others were imprisoned, and many priests, among whom was St Eulogius, as one who encouraged the martyrs by his instructions. It was then that he wrote his Exhortation to Martyrdom,<sup>1</sup> addressed to the virgins Flora and Mary, who were beheaded the 24th of November, in 851. These virgins promised to pray as soon as they should be with God, that their fellow prisoners might be restored to their liberty. Accordingly, St Eulogius and the rest were enlarged six days after their death. In the year 852, several suffered the like martyrdom, namely, Gumisund and Servus-Dei; Aurelius and Felix with their wives; Christopher and Levigild; Rogel and Servio-Deo. A council at Cordova, in 852, forbade any one to offer himself to martyrdom. Mahomet succeeded his father upon his sudden death by an apoplectic fit; but continued the persecution, and put to death, in 853, Fandila, a monk, Anastasius, Felix, and three nuns, Digna, Columba, and Pomposa. St Eulogius encouraged all these martyrs to their triumphs, and was the support of that distressed flock. His writings still breathe an inflamed zeal and spirit of martyrdom. The chief are his history of these martyrs, called the Memorial of the Saints, in three books; and his Apology for them against calumniators, showing them to be true martyrs, though without miracles.<sup>2</sup>

The Archbishop of Toledo dying in 858, St Eulogius was canonically elected to succeed him; but there was some obstacle that hindered him from being consecrated; though he did not outlive his election two months. A virgin, by name Leocritia, of a noble family among the Moors, had been instructed from her infancy in the Christian religion by one of her relations, and privately baptized. Her father and mother perceiving this, used her very ill, and scourged her day and night to compel her to renounce the faith. Having made her condition known to St Eulogius and his sister Anulona, intimating that she desired to go where she might freely exercise her religion, they secretly procured her the means of getting away from her parents, and concealed her for some time among faithful friends. But the matter was at length discovered, and they were all brought before the *cadi*. Eulogius offered to show the judge the true road to heaven, and to demonstrate Mahomet to be

<sup>1</sup> Documentum martyrii, t. ix. Bibl. Patr. p. 699.

<sup>2</sup> Some objected to these martyrs, that they were not honoured with frequent miracles as those had been who suffered in the primitive ages.

an impostor. The *cadi* threatened to have him scourged to death. The martyr told him his torments would be to no purpose; for he would never change his religion. Whereupon the *cadi* gave orders that he should be carried to the palace, and presented before the king's council. One of the lords of the council took the saint aside, and said to him: "Though the ignorant unhappily run headlong to death, a man of your learning and virtue ought not to imitate their folly. Be ruled by me, I entreat you: say but one word, since necessity requires it: you may afterwards resume your own religion, and we will promise that no inquiry shall be made after you." Eulogius replied, smiling, "Ah! if you could but conceive the reward which waits for those who persevere in the faith to the end, you would renounce your temporal dignity in exchange for it." He then began boldly to propose the truths of the gospel to them. But to prevent their hearing him, the council condemned him immediately to lose his head. As they were leading him to execution, one of the eunuchs of the palace gave him a blow on the face for having spoken against Mahomet: he turned the other cheek, and patiently received a second. He received the stroke of death out of the city gates, with great cheerfulness, on the 11th of March, 859. St Leocritia was beheaded four days after him, and her body thrown into the river *Bætis*, or *Guadalquivir*, but taken out by the Christians. The church honours both of them on the days of their martyrdom.

If we consider the conduct of Christ toward his church, which he planted at the price of his precious blood, and treats as his most beloved spouse, we shall admire a wonderful secret in the adorable councils of his tender providence. This church, so dear to him, and so precious in his eyes, he formed and spread under a general, most severe, and dreadful persecution. He has exposed it in every age to frequent and violent storms, and seems to delight in always holding at least some part or other of it in the fiery crucible. But the days of its severest trials were those of its most glorious triumphs. Then it shone above all other periods of time with the brightest examples of sanctity, and exhibited both to heaven and to men on earth the most glorious spectacles and triumphs. Then were formed in its bosom innumerable most illustrious heroes of all perfect virtue, who eminently inherited, and propagated in the hearts of many others, the true spirit of our crucified Redeemer. The same conduct God in his tender mercy holds with regard to those chosen souls which he destines to raise, by special graces, highest in his favour. When the counsels of divine providence shall be manifested to them in the next life, then they shall clearly see that their trials were the most happy moments and the most precious graces of their whole lives. In sicknesses, humiliations, and other crosses, the poison of self-love was expelled from their

hearts, their affections weaned from the world, opportunities were afforded them of practising the most heroic virtues, by the fervent exercise of which their souls were formed in the school of Christ, and his perfect spirit of humility, meekness, disengagement, and purity of the affections, ardent charity, and all other virtues, in which true Christian heroism consists. The forming of the heart of one saint is a great and sublime work, the masterpiece of divine grace, the end and the price of the death of the Son of God. It can only be finished by the cross on which we were engendered in Christ, and the mystery of our predestination is accomplished.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 11 :*

ST ÆNGUS, Bishop, surnamed "Kele-De" or "Worshipper of God," of the race of the Kings of Ulster : ST CONSTANTINE, martyr, said to have been a British king, who preached the Gospel among the Picts with St Columba ; died in 576 : ST EULOGIUS of Cordova : ST SOPHRONIUS, Patriarch of Jerusalem, called "The Sophist" because of his progress in wisdom. His works breathe an affecting piety.

### MARCH 12

## ST GREGORY THE GREAT, POPE, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 604)

ST GREGORY, from his illustrious actions and extraordinary virtues surnamed the Great, was born at Rome about the year 540. Gordianus, his father, enjoyed the dignity of a senator, and was very wealthy ; but after the birth of our saint renounced the world and died Regionarius, that is, one of the seven cardinal deacons who took care of the ecclesiastical districts of Rome. His mother, Sylvia, consecrated herself to God in a little oratory near St Paul's. Our saint was called Gregory, which in Greek implies a watchman, as Vigilius and Vigilantius in Latin. In his youth he applied himself, with unabated diligence, to the studies of grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy ; and after these first accomplishments, to the civil law and the canons of the church, in which he was perfectly skilled. He was only thirty-four years old when, in 574, he was made, by the Emperor Justin the Younger, prætor, or governor and chief magistrate, of Rome. By this dignity he was the chief judge of the city ; his pomp and state differed little from that of a consul, and he was obliged to wear the Trabea, which was a rich robe of silk, magnificently embroidered, and sparkling with precious stones—a garment only allowed to the consuls and prætor. But he could say, with Esther, that his heart always detested the pride of the world. From his infancy he loved and esteemed only heavenly things, and it was his chief delight to converse with holy monks, or to be retired in his closet, or in the church at his devotions. After the death of his father, he built and endowed six monasteries in Sicily out of the estates which he had in that island, and founded a seventh in his own house in Rome, which was the famous

monastery of St Andrew, on the hill Scaurus,<sup>1</sup> now possessed by the Order of Camaldoli. The first abbot of this house was Hilarion; the second Valentinus, under whom St Gregory himself took the monastic habit in 575, being thirty-five years old. In this retirement, Gregory applied himself with that vigour to fasting and the study of the sacred writings that he thereby contracted a great weakness in his stomach, and used to fall into fits of swooning if he did not frequently eat. What gave him the greatest affliction was his not being able to fast on an Easter-eve, a day on which, says John the deacon, every one, not even excepting little children, are used to fast. His great desire of conforming to the universal practice on that day occasioned his applying to a monk of eminent sanctity, named Eleutherius, with whom having prayed, and besought God to enable him to fast at least on that sacred day, he found himself on a sudden so well restored that he not only fasted that day but quite forgot his illness, as he himself relates.<sup>2</sup>

It was before his advancement to the see of Rome, or even to the government of his monastery, that he first, as Paul the deacon testifies, projected the conversion of the English nation. This great blessing took its rise from the following occasion.<sup>3</sup> Gregory happened one day to walk through the market, and here taking notice that certain youths of fine features and complexion were exposed to sale, he inquired what countrymen they were, and was answered that they came from Britain. He asked if the people of that country were Christians or heathens, and was told they were still heathens. Then Gregory, fetching a deep sigh, said: "It was a lamentable consideration that the prince of darkness should be master of so much beauty, and have so comely persons in his possession; and that so fine an outside should have nothing of God's grace to furnish it within." This incident made so great an impression upon him that he applied himself soon after to Pope Benedict I, and earnestly requested that some persons might be sent to preach Christianity in Britain. And not finding any one disposed to undertake that mission, he made an offer of himself for the service, with the pope's consent and approbation. Having obtained leave, he privately set forward on his journey, in company with several monks of his own monastery. But when his departure was known, the whole city was in an uproar, and the people ran in a body to the pope, whom they met going to St Peter's Church. They cried out to him in the utmost consternation: "Apostolical father, what have you done? In suffering Gregory to go away, you have destroyed Rome; you have undone us, and offended St Peter." At these pressing instances the pope despatched messengers to recall him; and the saint being overtaken by them on the third day, was obliged, though with great reluctance,

<sup>1</sup> See Annot. at the end of the life, p. 145 infra.  
<sup>2</sup> Dial. lib. iii. c. 33. <sup>3</sup> Hist. b. 2, c. 1.



to return to Rome. Not long after, the same pope, according to John the deacon and the Benedictines, or as Paul the deacon and Baronius say, his successor, Pelagius II, made him one of the seven deacons of the church at Rome who assisted the pope. Pelagius II sent him to Constantinople in quality of Apocrisiarius, or Nuncio of the holy see, to the religious Emperor Tiberius, by whom the saint was received and treated with the highest distinction. This public employment did not make him lay aside the practices of a monastic life, in order to which he had taken with him certain monks of his house, with whom he might the better continue them, and by their example excite himself to recollection and prayer. Mauritius having married the daughter of Tiberius in 582, who had the empire for her dowry, St Gregory was pitched upon to stand godfather to his eldest son. Eutychius was at that time Patriarch of Constantinople. This prelate, having suffered for the faith under Justinian, fell at length into an error, importing that after the general resurrection the glorified bodies of the elect will be no longer palpable, but of a more subtile texture than air. This error he couched in a certain book which he wrote. St Gregory was alarmed, and held several conferences with the patriarch upon that subject, both in private and before the emperor, and clearly demonstrated from the Scriptures that the glorified bodies of the saints will be the same which they had on earth, only delivered from the appendixes of mortality, and that they will be palpable as that of Christ was after his resurrection.<sup>1</sup> The good bishop, being docile and humble, retracted his mistake, and shortly after falling sick, in presence of the emperor, who had honoured him with a visit, taking hold of his skin with his hand, said, "I profess the belief that we shall all rise in this very flesh."

Pope Pelagius recalled St Gregory in 584. He brought with him to Rome an arm of St Andrew, and the head of St Luke, which the emperor had given him. He placed both these relics in his monastery of St Andrew, where the former remains to this day; but the latter has been removed thence to St Peter's, where it still continues. The saint with joy saw himself restored to the tranquillity of his cell, where he eagerly desired to bury himself with regard to the world, from which he had fled naked into this secure harbour; because, as he signified to St Leander, he saw how difficult a thing it is to converse with the world without contracting inordinate attachments. Pope Pelagius also made him his secretary. He still continued to govern his monastery, in which he showed a remarkable instance of severity. Justus, one of his monks, had acquired and kept privately three pieces of gold, which he confessed on his death-bed. St Gregory forbade the community to attend and pray by his bed-side, according to custom; but could not refuse him the

<sup>1</sup> St Greg. Moral. lib. xiv. c. 76, t. i. p. 465.

assistance of a priest; which the Council of Nice ordained that no one should be deprived of at the hour of death. Justus died in great sentiments of compunction; yet, in compliance with what the monastic discipline enjoins in such cases, in imitation of what St Macarius had prescribed on the like occasion, he ordered his corpse to be buried under the dunghill, and the three pieces of money to be thrown into the grave with it. Nevertheless, as he died penitent, he ordered mass to be daily offered up for him during thirty days. St Gregory says<sup>1</sup> that after the mass of the thirtieth day, Justus, appearing to his brother Copiosus, assured him that he had been in torments, but was then released. Pope Pelagius II dying in the beginning of the great pestilence, in January, 590, the clergy, senate, and Roman people unanimously agreed to choose St Gregory for their bishop, although he opposed his election with all his power. It was then the custom, at the election of a pope, to consult the emperor as the head of the senate and people. Our saint, trusting to his friendship with Mauritius, to whose son he stood godfather, wrote to him privately to conjure him not to approve of this choice. He wrote also with great earnestness to John, Patriarch of Constantinople, and to other powerful friends in that city, begging them to employ their interest with the emperor for that purpose; but complains in several letters afterwards that they had all refused to serve him. The governor of Rome intercepted his letters to the emperor, and sent others to him in the name of the senate and people to the contrary effect. In the meantime, the plague continued to rage at Rome with great violence; and, while the people waited for the emperor's answer, St Gregory took occasion from their calamities to exhort them to repentance. Having made them a pathetic sermon on that subject, he appointed a solemn litany, or procession, in seven companies, with a priest at the head of each, who were to march from different churches, and all to meet in that of St Mary Major, singing Kyrie Eleison as they went along the streets. During this procession there died in one hour's time four score of those who assisted at it. But St Gregory did not forbear to exhort the people, and to pray till such time as the distemper ceased. During the public calamity, St Gregory seemed to have forgot the danger he was in of being exalted to the pontifical throne; for he feared as much to lose the security of his poverty as the most avaricious can do to lose their treasures. He had been informed that his letters to Constantinople had been intercepted; wherefore, not being able to go out of the gates of Rome, where guards were placed, he prevailed with certain merchants to carry him off disguised, and shut up in a wicker basket. Three days he lay concealed in the woods and caverns, during which time the people of Rome observed fasts and prayers. Being miraculously discovered, and no longer able,

<sup>1</sup> Dial. lib. iv. c. 35, p. 465, t. II.

as he says himself,<sup>1</sup> to resist, after the manifestations of the divine will, he was taken, brought back to Rome with great acclamations, and consecrated on the 3rd of September, in 590. In this ceremony he was conducted, according to custom, to the Confession of St Peter, as his tomb is called, where he made a profession of his faith, which is still extant in his works. He sent also to the other patriarchs a synodal epistle, in which was contained the profession of his faith.<sup>2</sup> In it he declares that he received the four general councils as the four gospels. He received congratulatory letters upon his exaltation; to all which he returned for answer rather tears than words, in the most feeling sentiments of profound humility. He often invites others to weep with him, and conjures them to pray for him. John, Archbishop of Ravenna, modestly reprehended his cowardice in endeavouring by flight to decline the burden of the pastoral charge. In answer to his censure, and to instruct all pastors, soon after his exaltation he wrote his incomparable book, "On the Pastoral Care," setting forth the dangers, duties, and obligations of that charge, which he calls, from St Gregory Nazianzen, the art of arts and science of sciences. So great was the reputation of this performance, as soon as it appeared, that the Emperor Mauritius sent to Rome for a copy; and Anastasius, the holy Patriarch of Antioch, translated it into Greek. Many popes and councils have exhorted and commanded pastors of souls frequently to read it, and in it, as in a looking-glass, to behold themselves.<sup>3</sup> Our English saints made it always their rule, and King Alfred translated it into the Saxon tongue. In this book we read a transcript of the sentiments and conduct of our excellent pastor. His zeal for the glory of God, and the angelical function of paying him the constant tribute of praise in the church, moved him, in the beginning of his pontificate, to reform the church music. Preaching he regarded as the principal and most indispensable function of every pastor of souls, as it is called by St Thomas, and was most solicitous to feed his flock with the word of God. His forty homilies on the Gospels, which are extant, show that he spoke in a plain and familiar style, and without any pomp of words, but with a surprising eloquence of the heart. The same may be said of his twenty-two homilies on Ezekiel, which he preached whilst Rome was besieged by the Lombards, in 592. In the nineteenth he, in profound humility, applies to himself, with tears, whatever the prophet spoke against slothful, mercenary pastors. Paul the deacon relates that, after the saint's death, Peter the deacon, his most intimate friend, testified that he had seen in a vision, as an emblem of the Holy Ghost, a dove appear on his head, applying his bill to his ear whilst he was writing on the latter part of Ezekiel.

This great pope always remembered that, by his station, he was the

<sup>1</sup> Lib. i. Ep. 21; lib. vii. Ep. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. i. Ep. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Conc. iii. Touron, can 3. See Dom Bulteau's Preface to his French translation of St Gregory's Pastoral, printed in 1629.

common father of the poor. He relieved their necessities with so much sweetness and affability as to spare them the confusion of receiving the alms; and the old men among them he, out of deference, called his fathers. He often entertained several of them at his own table. He kept by him an exact catalogue of the poor, called by the ancients *Matriculæ*; and he liberally provided for the necessities of each. In the beginning of every month he distributed to all the poor, corn, wine, pulse, cheese, fish, flesh, and oil: he appointed officers for every street to send every day necessities to all the needy sick; before he ate he always sent off meats from his own table to some poor persons. One day a beggar being found dead in a corner of a by-street, he is said to have abstained some days from the celebration of the divine mysteries, condemning himself of a neglect in seeking the poor with sufficient care. He entertained great numbers of strangers, both at Rome and in other countries, and had every day twelve at his own table, whom his sacristan invited. He was most liberal in redeeming captives taken by the Lombards, for which he permitted the Bishop of Fano to break and sell the sacred vessels,<sup>1</sup> and ordered the Bishop of Messana to do the same.<sup>2</sup> He extended his charity to the heretics, whom he sought to gain by mildness. He wrote to the Bishop of Naples to receive and reconcile readily those who desired it, taking upon his own soul the danger, lest he should be charged with their perdition if they should perish by too great severity. Yet he was careful not to give them an occasion of triumphing by any unreasonable condescension; and, much more, not to relax the severity of the law of God in the least tittle.<sup>3</sup> He showed great moderation to the schismatics of Istria, and to the very Jews. When Peter, Bishop of Terracina, had taken from the latter their synagogue, St Gregory ordered it to be restored to them, saying they are not to be compelled, but converted by meekness and charity.<sup>4</sup> He repeated the same orders for the Jews of Sardinia, and for those of Sicily.<sup>5</sup> In his letters to his vicar in Sicily, and to the stewards of the patrimony of the Roman church in Africa, Italy, and other places, he recommends mildness and liberality towards his vassals and farmers; orders money to be advanced to those that were in distress, which they might repay by little and little, and most rigorously forbids any to be oppressed. He carefully computed and piously distributed the income of his revenues at four terms in the year. In his epistles we find him continually providing for the necessities of all churches, especially of those in Italy, which the wars of the Lombards and other calamities had made desolate. Notwithstanding his meekness and condescension, his courage was undaunted, and his confidence in the divine assistance unshaken amidst the greatest difficulties. "You know me," says he,<sup>6</sup> "and that I tolerate a long while; but when I have once determined

<sup>1</sup> Lib. vi. Ep. 35.<sup>2</sup> Lib. vii. Ep. 26.<sup>3</sup> Lib. i. Ep. 35, &c.<sup>4</sup> Lib. i. Ep. 35.<sup>5</sup> Lib. vii. Ep. 5; lib. xii. Ep. 30.<sup>6</sup> Lib. iv. Ep. 47.

to bear no longer, I go with joy against all dangers." Out of sincere humility he styled himself "the basest of men, devoured by sloth and laziness."<sup>1</sup> He subscribed himself in all his letters, Servant of the servants of God, which custom has been retained by his successors. Indeed, what is a pastor or superior but the servant of those for whom he is to give a rigorous account to God?

It is incredible how much he wrote, and, during the thirteen years that he governed the church, what great things he achieved for the glory of God, the good of the church, the reformation of manners, the edification of the faithful, the relief of the poor, the comfort of the afflicted, the establishment of ecclesiastical discipline, and the advancement of piety and religion. But our surprise redoubles upon us when we remember his continual bad state of health and frequent sicknesses, and his assiduity in prayer and holy contemplation; though this exercise it was that gave always wings to his soul. In his own palace he would allow of no furniture but what was mean and simple, nor have any attendants near his person but clergymen or monks of approved virtue, learning, and prudence. His household was a model of Christian perfection; and by his care, arts, sciences, and the heroic practice of piety flourished, especially in the city of Rome. The state of Christendom was, at that time, on every side miserably distracted, and stood in need of a pastor whose extraordinary sanctity, abilities, and courage should render him equal to every great enterprise. And such a one was Gregory. The eastern churches were wretchedly divided and shattered by the Nestorians, and the numerous spawn of the Eutychians—all which he repressed. In the west, England was buried in idolatry, and Spain, under the Visigoths, was overrun with the Arian heresy. These two flourishing countries owe their conversion, in a great measure, to his zeal, especially the former. In Africa he extirpated the Donatists, converted many schismatics in Istria and the neighbouring provinces, and reformed many grievous abuses in Gaul, whence he banished simony, which had almost universally infected that church. A great part of Italy was become a prey to the Lombards, who were partly Arians, partly idolaters. St Gregory often stopped the fury of their arms, and checked their oppression of the people: by his zeal he also brought over many to the Catholic faith, and had the comfort to see Agilulph, their king, renounce the Arian heresy to embrace it.

In 592, Romanus, exarch, or governor of Italy for the emperor, with a view to his own private interest, perfidiously broke the solemn treaty which he had made with the Lombards,<sup>2</sup> and took Perugia and several other towns. But the barbarians, who were much the stronger, revenged this insult with great cruelty, and besieged Rome itself. St Gregory neglected nothing to protect the oppressed, and raised troops for the

<sup>1</sup> *Præf. in Dial.*

<sup>2</sup> *Paul Diac. de Gest. Longobard. lib. iv. c. 8; St Greg. lib. ii. Ep. 46.*

defence of several places. At length, by entreaties and great presents, he engaged the Lombards to retire into their own territories. He re-proved the exarch for his breach of faith, but to no other effect than to draw upon himself the indignation of the governor and his master. Such were the extortions and injustices of this and other imperial officers that the yoke of the barbarians was lighter than the specious shadow of liberty under the tyranny of the empire: and with such rigour were the heaviest taxes levied that, to pay them, many poor inhabitants of Corsica were forced to sell their own children to the barbarians. These oppressions cried to heaven for vengeance; and St Gregory wrote boldly to the Empress Constantina,<sup>1</sup> entreating that the emperor, though he should be a loser by it, would not fill his exchequer by oppressing his people, nor suffer taxes to be levied by iniquitous methods, which would be an impediment to his eternal salvation. He sent to this empress a brandeum, or veil, which had touched the bodies of the apostles, and assured her that miracles had been wrought by such relics.<sup>2</sup> He promised to send her also some dust-filings of the chains of St Paul; of which relics he makes frequent mention in his epistles. At Cagliari, a certain rich Jew, having been converted to the faith, had seized the synagogue in order to convert it into a church, and had set up in it an image of the Virgin Mary and a cross. Upon the complaint of the other Jews, St Gregory ordered<sup>3</sup> the synagogue to be restored to them, but that the image and cross should be first removed with due veneration and respect. Writing to Theodelinda, queen of the Lombards, he mentions<sup>4</sup> that he sent her son, the young king, a little cross, in which was a particle of the wood of the true Cross, to carry about his neck. Secundinus, a holy hermit near Ravenna, godfather to this young king, begged of the pope some devout pictures. St Gregory, in his answer, says: "We have sent you two cloths, containing the picture of God our Saviour, and of Mary the holy Mother of God, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and one cross: also for a benediction, a key which hath been applied to the most holy body of St Peter, the prince of the apostles, that you may remain defended from the enemy." But when Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, had broken certain sacred images which some persons lately converted from idolatry honoured with their former idolatrous superstitions, St Gregory commended his zeal for suppressing this abuse, but reprovved him for breaking the images.<sup>5</sup> When the Archbishop of Ravenna used the pallium, not only at mass, but also in other functions, St Gregory wrote him a severe reprimand, telling him that no ornament shines so bright on the shoulders of a bishop as humility.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lib. v. Ep. 41.<sup>2</sup> Lib. iv. Ep. 30.<sup>3</sup> Lib. ix. Ep. 6, p. 930.<sup>4</sup> Lib. xiv. Ep. 12, p. 1270.<sup>5</sup> Lib. xi. Ep. 13.<sup>6</sup> Lib. iii. Ep. 56; lib. iii. Ep. 53; lib. ix. Ep. 59; lib. vi. Ep. 66; lib. vii. Ep. 19; lib. v. Ep. 20.

He extended his pastoral zeal and solicitude over all churches; and he frequently takes notice that the care of the churches of the whole world was entrusted to St Peter and his successors in the see of Rome.<sup>1</sup> This authority he exerted in the oriental patriarchates. A certain monk having been accused of Manicheism, and beaten by the order of John, the Patriarch of Constantinople, appealed to Pope Gregory, who sharply reprimanded the patriarch, exhorting him to eject a certain wicked young man by whom he suffered himself to be governed, and to do penance, and telling him: "If you do not keep the canons, I know not who you are."<sup>2</sup> He absolved the monk, with his colleague, a priest, re-established them in their monastery, and sent them back into the East, having received their profession of faith. He also absolved John, a priest of Chalcedon, who had been unjustly condemned by the delegates of the patriarch. Gregoria, a lady of the bed-chamber to the empress, being troubled with scruples, wrote to St Gregory that she should never be at ease till he should obtain of God, by a revelation, an assurance that her sins were forgiven her. To calm her disturbed mind, he sent her the following answer:<sup>3</sup> "You ask what is both difficult and unprofitable. Difficult, because I am unworthy to receive any revelation; unprofitable, because an absolute assurance of your pardon does not suit your state till you can no longer weep for your sins. You ought always to fear and tremble for them, and wash them away by daily tears. Paul had been taken up to the third heaven, yet trembled lest he should become a reprobate. Security is the mother of negligence."

The emperor forbade any to be admitted in monasteries who, having been in office, had not yet given up their accounts, or who were engaged in the military service. This order he sent to each of the patriarchs, to be by them notified to all the bishops of their respective districts. St Gregory, who was at that time sick, complied with the imperial mandate so far as to order the edict to be signified to the western bishops, as appears from a letter which he wrote to the emperor as soon as his health was re-established. We learn from another letter, which he wrote some years after to the bishops of the empire, that, on this occasion, he exhorted the bishops to comply with the first part, and as to the second, not to suffer persons engaged in the army to be admitted among the clergy or to the monastic habit unless their vocation had been thoroughly tried for the space of three years.

The Emperor Mauritius, having broken his league with the Avari, a Scythian nation, then settled on the banks of the Danube,<sup>4</sup> was defeated, and obliged to purchase an ignominious peace. He also refused to ransom the prisoners they had taken, though they asked at first only a golden

<sup>1</sup> Lib. iii. Ep. 39; lib. v. Ep. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. vii. Ep. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. vi. Ep. 15, 16, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Theophanes Chronogr.

penny a head, and at last only a sixth part, or four farthings; which refusal so enraged the barbarians that they put them all to the sword. Mauritius began then to be stung with remorse, gave large alms, and prayed that God would rather punish him in this life than in the next. His prayer was heard. His avarice and extortions had rendered him odious to all his subjects; and, in 602, he ordered the army to take winter quarters in the enemy's country, and to subsist on freebooting, without pay. The soldiers, exasperated at this treatment, chose one Phocas, a daring ambitious man, to be their leader, and marched to Constantinople, where he was crowned emperor. Mauritius had made his escape, but was taken with his family thirty miles out of the city and brought back. His five sons were slain before his eyes at Chalcedon: he repeated all the while, as a true penitent, these words: "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgments are righteous."<sup>1</sup> When the nurse offered her own child instead of his youngest, he would not suffer it. Last of all, he himself was massacred, after a reign of twenty years. His empress, Constantina, was confined with her three daughters, and murdered with them a few months after. The tyrant was slain by Heraclius, governor of Africa, after a tottering reign of eight years.

When Phocas mounted the throne his images were received and set up at Rome; nor could St Gregory, for the sake of the public good, omit writing to him letters of congratulation.<sup>2</sup> In them he makes some compliments to Phocas, which are not so much praises as respectful exhortations to a tyrant in power, and wishes of the public liberty, peace, and happiness. The saint nowhere approved his injustices or tyranny, though he regarded him, like Jehu, as the instrument of God to punish other sinners. He blamed Mauritius, but in things truly blamable, and drew from his punishment a seasonable occasion of wholesome advice which he gave to Phocas, whom the public safety of all Italy obliged him not to exasperate.

This holy pope had laboured many years under a great weakness of his breast and stomach, and was afflicted with slow fevers and frequent fits of the gout, which once confined him to his bed two whole years. God called him to himself on the 12th of March, the same year, about the sixty-fourth of his age, after he had governed the church thirteen years and six months and ten days. His pallium, the reliquary which he wore about his neck, and his girdle were preserved long after his death, when John the deacon wrote, who describes his picture drawn from the life, then to be seen in the Monastery of St Andrew. His holy remains rest in the Vatican Church. Both the Greeks and Latins honour his name. The Council of Clif, or Cloveshove, under Archbishop Cuthbert, in 747, commanded his feast to be observed a holiday in all

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. xiii. Ep. 37, 38.



the monasteries in England, which the Council of Oxford, in 1222, extended to the whole kingdom. This law subsisted till the change of religion.

Every superior who is endued with the sincere spirit of humility and charity looks upon himself with this great hope, as the servant of all, bound to labour and watch night and day, to bear every kind of affront, to suffer all manner of pains, to do all in his power, to put on every shape, and sacrifice his own ease and life to procure the spiritual improvement of the least of those who are committed to his charge. St Paul, though vested with the most sublime authority, makes use of terms so mild and so powerfully ravishing that they must melt the hardest heart. Instead of commanding in the name of God, see how he usually expresses himself:—"I entreat you, O Timothy, by the love which you bear me. I conjure you, by the bowels of Jesus Christ. I beseech you, by the meekness of Christ. If you love me, do this." And see how he directs us to reprove those who sin: "If any one should fall, do you who are spiritual remind him in the spirit of meekness, remembering that you may also fall," and into a more grievous crime. St Peter, who had received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, shed more tears of tender charity than he speaks words. What heart can be so savage and unnatural as to refuse to obey him who, having authority to lay injunctions and thunder out anathemas, weeps instead of commanding? If SS Peter and Paul pour out the water of tears and mildness, St John casts darts of fire into the hearts of those whom he commands. "My little children," says he, "if you love Christ, do this. I conjure you, by Christ, our good Master, love affectionately, and this is enough. Love will teach you what to do. The unction of the Holy Ghost will instruct you." This is the true spirit of governing—a method sure to gain the hearts of others, and to inspire them with a love of the precept itself and of virtue. St Macarius of Egypt was styled the god of the monks, so affectionately and readily was he obeyed by them, because he never spoke a word with anger or impatience. Moses was chosen by God to be the leader and legislator of his people, because he was the meekest of men: and with what astonishing patience did he bear the murmurs and rebellions of an ungrateful and stiff-necked people! David's meekness towards Saul and others purchased him the crown, and was one of the principal virtues by which he was rendered a king according to God's own heart. Those who command with imperious authority show they are puffed up with the empty wind of pride, which makes them feel an inordinate pleasure in the exercise of power, the seed of tyranny, and the bane of virtue in their souls. Anger and impatience, which are more dangerous, because usually canonized under the name of zeal, demonstrate persons to be

very ill qualified for governing others who are not masters of themselves or their own passions.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 12 :*

ST GREGORY THE GREAT, Pope : ST MAXIMILIAN, son of a Christian soldier in Numidia : ST PAUL, Bishop of Laon, a native of Cornwall, a cousin of St Samson and his fellow-disciple under St Iltutus, who advised him to leave his monastery in order to serve God more perfectly as a hermit.

### MARCH 13

### ST EUPHRASIA, VIRGIN

ANTIGONUS, the father of this saint, was a nobleman of the first rank and quality in the court of Theodosius the Younger, nearly allied in blood to that emperor, and honoured by him with several great employments in the state. He was married to Euphrasia, a lady no less illustrious for her birth and virtue, by whom he had one only daughter and heiress, called also Euphrasia, the saint of whom we treat. After her birth, her pious parents, by mutual consent, engaged themselves by vow to pass the remainder of their lives in perpetual continence, that they might more perfectly aspire to the invisible joys of the life to come; and from that time they lived together as brother and sister, in the exercise of devotion, alms-deeds, and penance. Antigonus died within a year, and the holy widow, to shun the importunate addresses of young suitors for marriage, and the distraction of friends, not long after withdrew privately with her little daughter into Egypt, where she was possessed of a very large estate. In that country she fixed her abode near a holy monastery of one hundred and thirty nuns, who never used any other food than herbs and pulse, which they took only after sunset, and some only once in two or three days: they wore and slept on sackcloth, wrought with their hands, and prayed almost without interruption. When sick, they bore their pains with patience, esteeming them an effect of the divine mercy, and thanking God for the same; nor did they seek relief from physicians, except in cases of absolute necessity, and then only allowed of ordinary general remedies, as the monks of La Trappe do at this day. Delicate and excessive attention to health nourishes self-love and immortification, and often destroys that health which it studies anxiously to preserve. By the example of these holy virgins, the devout mother animated herself to fervour in the exercise of religion and charity, to which she totally dedicated herself. She frequently visited these servants of God, and earnestly entreated them to accept a considerable annual revenue, with an obligation that they should always be bound to pray for the soul of her deceased husband. But the abbess refused the estate, saying, "We have renounced all the conveniences of the world, in order to purchase heaven. We are poor, and such we desire to remain." She could only

be prevailed upon to accept a small matter to supply the church-lamp with oil, and for incense to be burned on the altar.

The young Euphrasia, at seven years of age, made it her earnest request to her mother that she might be permitted to serve God in this monastery. The pious mother, on hearing this, wept for joy, and not long after presented her to the abbess, who, taking up an image of Christ, gave it into her hands. The tender virgin kissed it, saying, "By vow I consecrate myself to Christ." Then the mother led her before an image of our Redeemer, and lifting up her hands to heaven, said "Lord Jesus Christ, receive this child under your special protection. You alone doth she love and seek: to you doth she recommend herself." Then turning to her dear daughter, she said, "May God, who laid the foundations of the mountains, strengthen you always in his holy fear." And leaving her in the hands of the abbess, she went out of the monastery weeping. Some time after this she fell sick, and being forewarned of her death, gave her last instructions to her daughter in these words: "Fear God, honour your sisters, and serve them with humility. Never think of what you have been, nor say to yourself that you are of royal extraction. Be humble and poor on earth, that you may be rich in heaven." The good mother soon after slept in peace. Upon the news of her death, the Emperor Theodosius sent for the noble virgin to court, having promised her in marriage to a favourite young senator. But the virgin wrote him with her own hand the following answer: "Invincible emperor, having consecrated myself to Christ in perpetual chastity, I cannot be false to my engagement, and marry a mortal man, who will shortly be the food of worms. For the sake of my parents, be pleased to distribute their estates among the poor, the orphans, and the church. Set all my slaves at liberty, and discharge my vassals and servants, giving them whatever is their due. Order my father's stewards to acquit my farmers of all they owe since his death, that I may serve God without let or hindrance, and may stand before him without the solicitude of temporal affairs. Pray for me, you, and your empress, that I may be made worthy to serve Christ." The messengers returned with this letter to the emperor, who shed many tears in reading it. The senators who heard it burst also into tears, and said to his majesty, "She is the worthy daughter of Antigonus and Euphrasia, of your royal blood, and the holy offspring of a virtuous stock." The emperor punctually executed all she desired, a little before his death, in 395.

St Euphrasia was to her pious sisters a perfect pattern of humility, meekness, and charity. If she found herself assaulted by any temptation, she immediately discovered it to the abbess, to drive away the devil by that humiliation, and to seek a remedy. The discreet superioress often enjoined her, on such occasions, some humbling and painful penitential

labour; as sometimes to carry great stones from one place to another; which employment she once, under an obstinate assault, continued thirty days together with wonderful simplicity, till the devil being vanquished by her humble obedience, and chastisement of her body, he left her in peace. Her diet was only herbs or pulse, which she took after sunset, at first every day, but afterwards only once in two or three, or sometimes seven days. But her abstinence received its chief merit from her humility, without which it would have been a fast of devils. She cleaned out the chambers of the other nuns, carried water to the kitchen, and out of obedience cheerfully employed herself in the meanest drudgery, making painful labour a part of her penance. To mention one instance of her extraordinary meekness and humility—it is related that one day a maid in the kitchen asked her why she fasted whole weeks, which no other attempted to do besides the abbess. Her answer was that the abbess had enjoined her that penance. The other called her an hypocrite. Upon which Euphrasia fell at her feet, begging her to pardon and pray for her. In which action it is hard to say whether we ought more to admire the patience with which she received so unjust a rebuke and slander, or the humility with which she sincerely condemned herself; as if, by her hypocrisy and imperfections, she had been a scandal to others. She was favoured with miracles both before and after her death, which happened in the year 410, and the thirtieth of her age. Her name is recorded on this day in the Roman Martyrology. See her ancient authentic life in Rosweide, p. 351, D'Andilly, and most correct in the *Acta Sanctorum*, by the Bollandists.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 13 :*

ST EUPHRASIA : ST GERALD, Bishop, an Englishman in the Abbey of Mayo : ST KENNOCHA, virgin, a model of all virtues in a nunnery in Fife, died in 1007 : ST MOCHEOMOC, in Latin Pulcherius, Abbot : ST NICEPHORUS, Patriarch of Constantinople, who "has left us a chronicle from the beginning of the world" : ST THEOPHANES, Abbot, who was left at three years old heir to a great estate, forced to marry by his friends ; but he and his young wife agreed to forsake the world. He suffered much under the persecutions of the Iconoclasts, and was banished in his old age after having been imprisoned and scourged.

#### MARCH 14

### ST MAUD, OR MATHILDIS, QUEEN OF GERMANY

(A.D. 968)

[From her life, written forty years after her death, by the order of St Henry ;  
*Acta Sanct. t. vii. p. 361.]*

THIS princess was daughter of Theodoric, a powerful Saxon count. Her parents, being sensible that piety is the only true greatness, placed her very young in the monastery of Erford, of which her grandmother, Maud, who had renounced the world in her widowhood, was then abbess. Here our saint acquired an extraordinary relish for prayer and spiritual reading;

and learned to work at her needle, and to employ all the precious moments of life in something serious and worthy the great end of her creation. She remained in that house an accomplished model of all virtues till her parents married her to Henry, son of Otho, Duke of Saxony, in 913. Her husband, surnamed the Fowler, from his fondness for the diversion of hawking, then much in vogue, became Duke of Saxony by the death of his father in 916; and in 919, upon the death of Conrad, was chosen King of Germany. He was a pious and victorious prince, and very tender of his subjects. His solicitude in easing their taxes made them ready to serve their country in his wars at their own charges, though he generously recompensed their zeal after his expeditions, which were always attended with success. Whilst he, by his arms, checked the insolence of the Hungarians and Danes, and enlarged his dominions by adding to them Bavaria, Maud gained domestic victories over her spiritual enemies, more worthy of a Christian, and far greater in the eyes of heaven. She nourished the precious seeds of devotion and humility in her heart by assiduous prayer and meditation; and, not content with the time which the day afforded for these exercises, employed part of the night the same way. The nearer the view was which she took of worldly vanities, the more clearly she discovered their emptiness and dangers, and sighed to see men pursue such bubbles to the loss of their souls; for, under a fair outside, they contain nothing but poison and bitterness.

It was her delight to visit, comfort, and exhort the sick and the afflicted; to serve and instruct the poor, teaching them the advantages of their state from the benedictions and example of Christ; and to afford her charitable succours to prisoners, procuring them their liberty where motives of justice would permit it, or at least easing the weight of their chains by liberal alms; but her chief aim was to make them shake off their sins by sincere repentance. Her husband, edified by her example, concurred with her in every pious undertaking which she projected. After twenty-three years' marriage, God was pleased to call the king to himself by an apoplectic fit, in 936. Maud, during his sickness, went to the church to pour forth her soul in prayer for him at the foot of the altar. As soon as she understood, by the tears and cries of the people, that he had expired, she called for a priest that was fasting, to offer the holy sacrifice for his soul; and at the same time cut off the jewels which she wore, and gave them to the priest, as a pledge that she renounced from that moment the pomp of the world. She had three sons: Otho, afterwards emperor; Henry, Duke of Bavaria; and St Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne. Otho was crowned King of Germany in 937, and Emperor of Rome in 962, after his victories over the Bohemians and Lombards. Maud, in the contest between her two elder sons for the crown, which was elective, favoured Henry, who was the younger, a fault she expiated by severe



## SAINT MATHILDIS

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She was both saint and queen. Maud's husband became King of Germany and under her gentle influence ruled his people well. When he died Maud renounced her jewels and fine clothes and devoted her life to the poor and sick in her kingdom. She was loved and revered by all her subjects who looked upon her as their friend.

afflictions and penance. These two sons conspired to strip her of her dowry on the unjust pretence that she had squandered away the revenues of the state on the poor. This persecution was long and cruel, coming from all that was most dear to her in this world. The unnatural princes at length repented of their injustice, were reconciled to her, and restored her all that had been taken from her. She then became more liberal in her alms than ever, and founded many churches, with five monasteries; of which the principal were that of Polden, in the duchy of Brunswick, in which she maintained three thousand monks, and that of Quedlinbourg, in the duchy of Saxony. She buried her husband in this place, and when she had finished the buildings, made it her usual retreat. She applied herself totally to her devotions and to works of mercy. It was her greatest pleasure to teach the poor and ignorant how to pray, as she had formerly taught her servants. In her last sickness she made her confession to her grandson William, the Archbishop of Mentz, who yet died twelve days before her, on his road home. She again made a public confession before the priests and monks of the place, received a second time the last sacraments, and lying on a sackcloth with ashes on her head, died on the 14th of March, in 968. Her body remains at Quedlinbourg. Her name is recorded in the Roman Martyrology on this day.

The beginning of true virtue is most ardently to desire it, and to ask it of God with the utmost assiduity and earnestness,<sup>1</sup> preferring it with all the saints to kingdoms and thrones, and considering riches as nothing in comparison of this our only and inestimable treasure. Fervent prayer, holy meditation, and reading pious books are the principal means by which it is to be constantly improved, and the interior life of the soul to be strengthened. These are so much the more necessary in the world than in a religious state, as its poison and distractions threaten her continually with the greatest danger. Amidst the pomp, hurry, and amusements of a court, St Maud gave herself up to holy contemplation with such earnestness that, though she was never wanting to any exterior or social duties, her soul was raised above all perishable goods, dwelt always in heaven, and sighed after that happy moment which was to break the bonds of slavery and unite her to God in eternal bliss and perfect love.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 14 :*

SAINTS ACEPSIMAS, bishop, JOSEPH, priest, and AITHILAHAS, deacon, martyred under the persecution of King Sapor, which lasted forty years : ST BONIFACE, Bishop of Ross, brought by his zeal for souls from Italy to North Britain, where he preached Christ and reformed the manners of the people in the Provinces of Ross, Elgin and Murray : and ST MAUD, Queen of Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> Sap. vii. 6.

MARCH 15

# ST ABRAHAM, HERMIT, AND HIS NIECE, ST MARY, A PENITENT

(About the year 360)

[From his life written by his friend, St Ephrem, Op. t. ii. p. 1, ed. nov. Vatic. See other Acts of St Abraham, given in Latin by Lipoman, 29th Oct., and by Surius, 16th March, mentioned in Greek by Lambecius, Bibl. Vind. t. viii. pp. 255, 260, 266, and by Montfaucon, Bibl. Coisl. p. 211. Two other kinds of Greek Acts are found among the MSS. at the Abbey of St Germain-des-Prez, at Paris, Bibl. Coisl. ib. See also Jos. Assemani, Bibl. Orient. t. i. pp. 38 and 396, from the Chronicle of Edessa; likewise Kohlius, *Introductio in historiam et rem literariam Sclavorum*, p. 316. Aitonaviæ, A.D. 1729.]

ST ABRAHAM was born at Chidana, in Mesopotamia, near Edessa, of wealthy and noble parents, who, after giving him a most virtuous education, were desirous of engaging him in the married state. In compliance with their inclinations, Abraham took to wife a pious and noble virgin; but earnestly desiring to live and die in the state of holy virginity, as soon as the marriage ceremony and feast were over, having made known his resolution to his new bride, he secretly withdrew to a cell two miles from the city of Edessa, where his friends found him at prayer after a search of seventeen days. By earnest entreaties he obtained their consent, and after their departure walled up the door of his cell, leaving only a little window, through which he received what was necessary for his subsistence. He spent his whole time in adoring and praising God, and imploring his mercy. He every day wept abundantly. He was possessed of no other earthly goods but a cloak and a piece of sackcloth which he wore, and a little vessel out of which he both ate and drank. For fifty years he was never wearied with his austere penance and holy exercises, and seemed to draw from them every day fresh vigour. Ten years after he had left the world, by the demise of his parents, he inherited their great estates, but commissioned a virtuous friend to distribute the revenues in alms-deeds. Many resorted to him for spiritual advice, whom he exceedingly comforted and edified by his holy discourses.

A large country town in the diocese of Edessa remained till that time addicted to idolatry, and its inhabitants had loaded with injuries and outrages all the holy monks and others who had attempted to preach the gospel to them. The bishop at length cast his eye on Abraham, ordained him priest, though much against his will, and sent him to preach the faith to those obstinate infidels. He wept all the way as he went, and with great earnestness repeated this prayer: "Most merciful God, look down on my weakness; assist me with thy grace, that thy name may be glorified. Despise not the works of thine own hands." At the sight of the town, reeking with the impious rites of idolatry, he redoubled the torrents of his tears; but found the citizens resolutely determined not



to hear him speak. Nevertheless, he continued to pray and weep among them without intermission, and though he was often beaten and ill-treated, and thrice banished by them, he always returned with the same zeal. After three years the infidels were overcome by his meekness and patience, and being touched by an extraordinary grace, all demanded baptism. He stayed one year longer with them to instruct them in the faith; and on their being supplied with priests and other ministers, he went back to his cell.

His brother dying soon after his return thither, left an only daughter, called Mary, whom the saint undertook to train up in a religious life. For this purpose he placed her in a cell near his own, where, by the help of his instructions, she became eminent for her piety and penance. At the end of twenty years she was unhappily seduced by a wolf in sheep's clothing, a wicked monk, who resorted often to the place under colour of receiving advice from her uncle. Hereupon falling into despair, she went to a distant town, where she gave herself up to the most criminal disorders. The saint ceased not for two years to weep and pray for her conversion. Being then informed where she dwelt, he dressed himself like a citizen of that town, and going to the inn where she lived in the pursuit of her evil courses, desired her company with him at supper. When he saw her alone, he took off his cap which disguised him, and with many tears said to her, "Daughter Mary, don't you know me? What is now become of your angelic habit, of your tears and watchings in the divine praises?" &c.

Seeing her struck and filled with horror and confusion, he tenderly encouraged her and comforted her, saying that he would take her sins upon himself if she would faithfully follow his advice, and that his friend Ephrem also prayed and wept for her. She with many tears returned him her most hearty thanks, and promised to obey in all things his injunctions. He set her on his horse, and led the beast himself on foot. In this manner he conducted her back to his desert, and shut her up in a cell behind his own. There she spent the remaining fifteen years of her life in continual tears, and the most perfect practices of penance and other virtues. Almighty God was pleased within three years after her conversion to favour her with the gift of working miracles by her prayers. And as soon as she was dead, "her countenance appeared to us," says St Ephrem, "so shining, that we understood that choirs of angels had attended at her passage out of this life into a better." St Abraham died five years before her: at the news of whose sickness almost the whole city and country flocked to receive his benediction. When he had expired, every one strove to procure for themselves some part of his clothes; and St Ephrem, who was an eye-witness, relates that many sick were cured by the touch of these relics. SS Abraham and Mary were both dead

when St Ephrem wrote, who died himself in 378. St Abraham is named in the Latin, Greek, and Coptic calendars; and also St Mary in those of the Greeks.

St Abraham converted his desert into a paradise, because he found in it his God, whose presence makes Heaven. Thus Christians who are placed in distracting stations may also do, if they accustom themselves to converse interiorly with God in purity of heart, and in all their actions and desires have only his will in view. Such a life is a kind of imitation of the seraphims, to whom to live and to love are one and the same thing. "The angels," says St Gregory the Great, "always carry their heaven about with them wheresoever they are sent, because they never depart from God, or cease to behold him; ever dwelling in the bosom of his immensity, living and moving in him, and exercising their ministry in the sanctuary of his divinity." This is the happiness of every Christian who makes a desert, by interior solitude, in his own heart.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 15 :*

ST ABRAHAM and his niece ST MARY, a penitent : ST CLEMENT HOFBAUER, Confessor, 1751-1820, one of the German dramatist's "three men of tremendous energy," the other two being Napoleon and Goethe : BLESSED LOUISE DE MARILLAC, founder of the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, 1591-1660 : BLESSED WILLIAM HART, priest, martyred under Elizabeth, 1583 : and ST ZACHARY, Pope, who succeeded Gregory III. in 741 ; a man of singular meekness and goodness.

## MARCH 16

### ST JULIAN OF CILICIA, MARTYR

[From the panegyric of St Chrysostom, t. ii. p. 671 ; Ed. Ben. Tillem. t. v. p. 573.]

THIS saint was a Cilician, of a senatorian family in Anazarbus, and a minister of the gospel. In the persecution of Diocletian he fell into the hands of a judge who, by his brutal behaviour, resembled more a wild beast than a man. The president, seeing his constancy proof against the sharpest torments, hoped to overcome him by the long continuance of his martyrdom. He caused him to be brought before his tribunal every day; sometimes he caressed him, at other times threatened him with a thousand tortures. For a whole year together he caused him to be dragged as a malefactor through all the towns of Cilicia, imagining that this shame and confusion might vanquish him; but it served only to increase the martyr's glory, and gave him an opportunity of encouraging in the faith all the Christians of Cilicia by his example and exhortations. He suffered every kind of torture. The bloody executioners had torn his flesh, furrowed his sides, laid his bones bare, and exposed his very bowels to view. Scourges, fire, and the sword were employed various ways to torment him with the utmost cruelty. The judge saw that to torment him longer was labouring to shake a rock, and was forced at length to own himself conquered by condemning him to death; in which,

however, he studied to surpass his former cruelty. He was then at Ægea, a town on the sea coast; and he caused the martyr to be sewed up in a sack with scorpions, serpents, and vipers, and so thrown into the sea. This was the Roman punishment for parricides, the worst of malefactors, yet seldom executed on them. Eusebius mentions that St Ulpian of Tyre suffered a like martyrdom, being thrown into the sea in a leather sack, together with a dog and an asp. The sea gave back the body of our holy martyr, which the faithful conveyed to Alexandria of Cilicia, and afterwards to Antioch, where St Chrysostom pronounced his panegyric before his shrine. He eloquently sets forth how much those sacred relics were honoured; and affirms that no devil could stand their presence, and that men by them found a remedy for their bodily distempers, and the cure of the evils of the soul.

The martyrs lost with joy their worldly honours, dignity, estates, friends, liberty, and lives, rather than forfeit for one moment their fidelity to God. They courageously bade defiance to pleasures and torments, to prosperity and adversity, to life and death, saying, with the apostle, "Who shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ?" Crowns, sceptres, worldly riches and pleasures, you have no charms which shall ever tempt me to depart in the least tittle from the allegiance which I owe to God. Alarming fears of the most dreadful evils, prisons, racks, fire, and death, in every shape of cruelty, you shall never shake my constancy. Nothing shall ever separate me from the love of Christ. This must be the sincere disposition of every Christian.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 16 :*

ST FINIAN, surnamed "The Leper," who suffered a loathsome disease with the patience of Job : ST JULIAN OF CILICIA : and THE BLESSED ROBERT DALBY and THE BLESSED JOHN AMIAS (or ANN ?), priests, English martyrs in 1589.

### MARCH 17

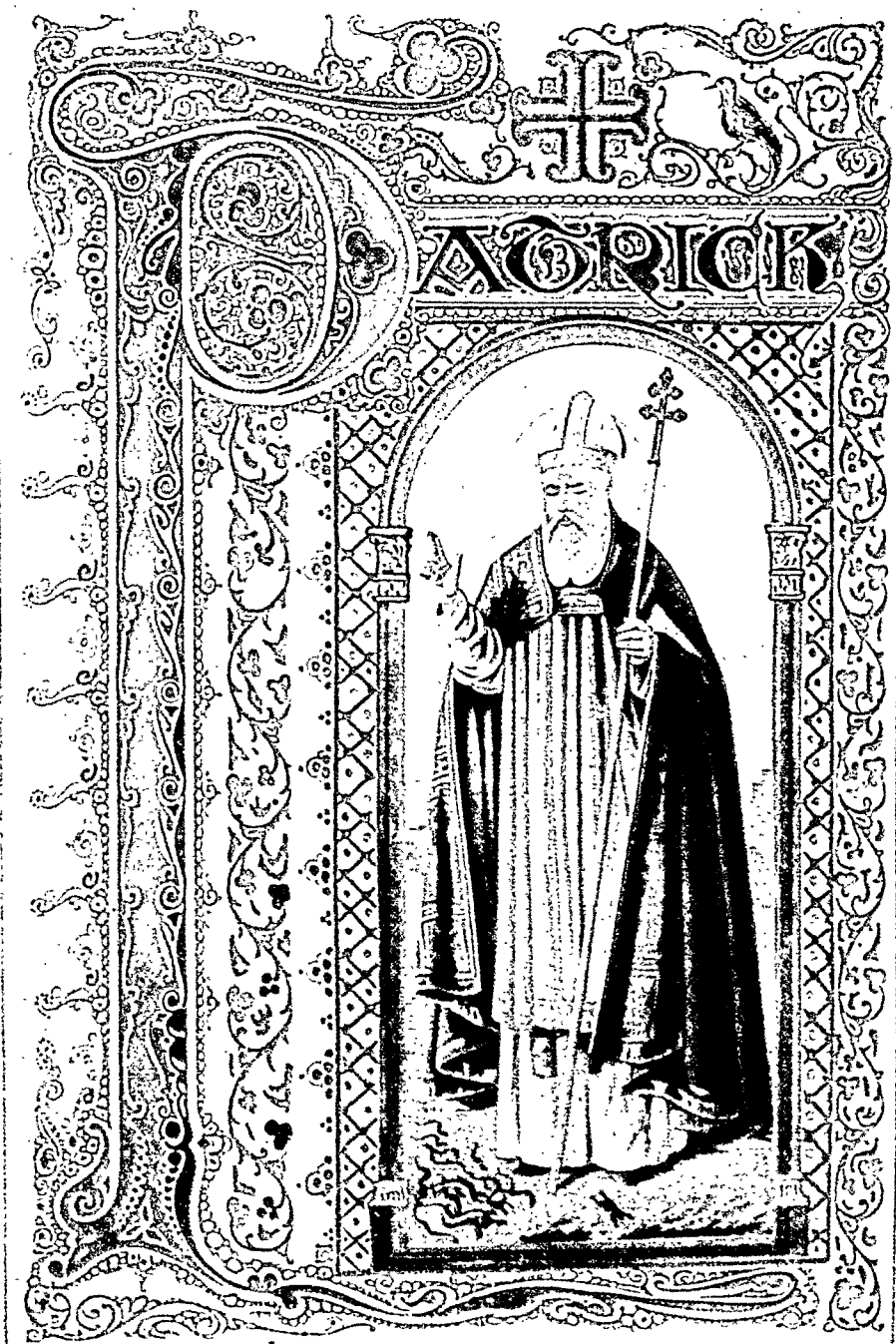
## ST PATRICK, BISHOP, CONFESSOR, APOSTLE OF IRELAND

(A.D. 464)

[The Irish have many lives of their great apostle, whereof the two principal are, that compiled by Jocelin, a Cistercian monk, in the twelfth century, who quotes four lives written by disciples of the saint; and that by Probus, who, according to Bollandus, lived in the seventh century. But in both are intermixed several injudicious popular reports. We, with Tillemont, chiefly confine ourselves to the saint's own writings, his Confession, and his letter to Corotic, which that judicious critic doubts not to be genuine. The style in both is the same; he is expressed in them to be the author; his "Confession" is quoted by all the authors of his life, and the letter was written before the conversion of the Franks under King Clovis, in 496. See Tillemont, t. xvi. 455, and Britannia Sancta.]

If the virtue of children reflects an honour on their parents, much more justly is the name of St Patrick rendered illustrious by the innumerable

lights of sanctity with which the church of Ireland, planted by his labours in the most remote corner of the then known world, shone during many ages; and by the colonies of saints with which it peopled many foreign countries; for, under God, its inhabitants derived from their glorious apostle the streams of that eminent sanctity by which they were long conspicuous to the whole world. St Patrick was born in the decline of the fourth century, and, as he informs us in his "Confession," in a village called Bonaven Taberniæ, which seems to be the town of Kilpatrick, on the mouth of the river Cluyd, in Scotland, between Dunbriton and Glasgow. He calls himself both a Briton and a Roman, or of a mixed extraction, and says his father was of a good family, named Calphurnius, and a denizen of a neighbouring city of the Romans, who not long after abandoned Britain, in 409. Some writers call his mother Conchessa, and say that she was niece to St Martin of Tours. At fifteen years of age he committed a fault, which appears not to have been a great crime, yet was to him a subject of tears during the remainder of his life. He says that when he was sixteen he lived still ignorant of God, meaning of the devout knowledge and fervent love of God, for he was always a Christian; he never ceased to bewail this neglect, and wept when he remembered that he had been one moment of his life insensible of the divine love. In his sixteenth year he was carried into captivity by certain barbarians, together with many of his father's vassals and slaves taken upon his estate. They took him into Ireland, where he was obliged to keep cattle on the mountains and in the forests, in hunger and nakedness, amidst snows, rain, and ice. Whilst he lived in this suffering condition, God had pity on his soul, and quickened him to a sense of his duty by the impulse of a strong interior grace. The young man had recourse to him with his whole heart in fervent prayer and fasting; and from that time faith and the love of God acquired continually new strength in his tender soul. St Patrick, after six months spent in slavery under the same master, was admonished by God in a dream to return to his own country, and informed that a ship was then ready to sail thither. He repaired immediately to the sea-coast, though at a great distance, and found the vessel; but could not obtain his passage, probably for want of money. Thus new trials ever await the servants of God. The saint returned towards his hut, praying as he went; but the sailors, though pagans, called him back and took him on board. After three days' sail they made land, probably in the north of Scotland; but wandered twenty-seven days through deserts, and were a long while distressed for want of provisions, finding nothing to eat. Patrick had often entertained the company on the infinite power of God; they therefore asked him why he did not pray for relief. Animated by a strong faith, he assured them that if they would address themselves with their whole hearts to the true God, he would hear and succour them.



## SAINT PATRICK

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Beloved Patron Saint of Ireland, St. Patrick was, in fact, born in Scotland. At sixteen he was made prisoner by a horde of barbarians who shipped him to Ireland as their slave. Many were Patrick's adventures, after his escape, before he was once again to set foot on the Emerald Isle. He brought to the idol-worshipping Irish his own burning love of Christ and by his teaching and example changed the heart of a nation.

They did so, and on the same day met with a herd of swine. From that time provisions never failed them, till, on the twenty-seventh day, they came into a country that was cultivated and inhabited. During their distress, Patrick refused to touch meats which had been offered to idols. One day a great stone from a rock happened to fall upon him, and had like to have crushed him to death, whilst he was laid down to take a little rest. But he invoked Elias, and was delivered from the danger. Some years afterwards he was again led captive, but recovered his liberty after two months. When he was at home with his parents, God manifested to him by divers visions that he destined him to the great work of the conversion of Ireland. He thought he saw all the children of that country from the wombs of their mothers stretching out their hands and piteously crying to him for relief.

The authors of his life say that after his second captivity he travelled into Gaul and Italy, and had seen St Martin, St Germanus of Auxerre, and Pope Celestine, and that he received his mission and the apostolical benediction from this pope, who died in 432. But it seems, from his Confession, that he was ordained deacon, priest, and bishop for his mission in his own country. It is certain that he spent many years in preparing himself for those sacred functions. Great opposition was made against his episcopal consecration and mission, both by his own relations and by the clergy. These made him great offers, in order to detain him among them, and endeavoured to affright him by exaggerating the dangers to which he exposed himself amidst the enemies of the Romans and Britons, who did not know God. Some objected, with the same view, the fault which he had committed thirty years before as an obstacle to his ordination. All these temptations threw the saint into great perplexities, and had like to have made him abandon the work of God. But the Lord, whose will he consulted by earnest prayer, supported him and comforted him by a vision—so that he persevered in his resolution. He forsook his family, sold, as he says, his birthright and dignity, to serve strangers, and consecrated his soul to God, to carry his name to the end of the earth. He was determined to suffer all things for the accomplishment of his holy design, to receive in the same spirit both prosperity and adversity, and to return thanks to God equally for the one as for the other, desiring only that his name might be glorified, and his divine will accomplished to his own honour. In this disposition he passed into Ireland, to preach the gospel, where the worship of idols still generally reigned. Such was the fruit of his preachings and sufferings that he consecrated to God, by baptism, an infinite number of people, and laboured effectually that they might be perfected in his service by the practice of virtue. He ordained everywhere clergymen; induced women to live in holy widowhood and continence; consecrated virgins to Christ, and instituted monks. Great

numbers embraced these states of perfection with extreme ardour. Many desired to confer earthly riches on him who had communicated to them the goods of heaven; but he made it a capital duty to decline all self-interest, and whatever might dishonour his ministry. He took nothing from the many thousands whom he baptized, and often gave back the little presents which some laid on the altar. He always gave till he had no more to bestow, and rejoiced to see himself poor, with Jesus Christ, knowing poverty and afflictions to be more profitable to him than riches and pleasures. The happy success of his labours cost him many persecutions.

A certain prince named Corotick, a Christian, though in name only, disturbed the peace of his flock. He seems to have reigned in some part of Wales, after the Britons had been abandoned by the Romans. This tyrant, as the saint calls him, having made a descent into Ireland, plundered the country where St Patrick had been just conferring the holy chrism, that is, confirmation, on a great number of Neophytes, who were yet in their white garments after baptism. Corotick, without paying any regard to justice or to the holy sacrament, massacred many, and carried away others, whom he sold to the infidel Picts or Scots. This probably happened at Easter or Whitsuntide. The next day the saint sent the barbarian a letter by a holy priest whom he had brought up from his infancy, entreating him to restore the Christian captives, and at least part of the booty he had taken, that the poor people might not perish for want, but was only answered by railleries, as if the Irish could not be the same Christians with the Britons; which arrogance and pride sunk those barbarous conquerors beneath the dignity of men, whilst by it they were puffed up above others in their own hearts. The saint, therefore, to prevent the scandal which such a flagrant enormity gave to his new converts, writ with his own hand a public circular letter. In it he styles himself a sinner and an ignorant man; for such is the sincere humility of the saints (most of all when they are obliged to exercise any acts of authority), contrary to the pompous titles which the world affects. He declares, nevertheless, that he is established Bishop of Ireland, and pronounces Corotick, and the other parricides and accomplices, separated from him and from Jesus Christ, whose place he holds, forbidding any to eat with them, or to receive their alms, till they should have satisfied God by the tears of sincere penance and restored the servants of Jesus Christ to their liberty. This letter expresses the most tender love for his flock and his grief for those who had been slain, yet mingled with joy because they reign with the prophets, apostles, and martyrs. Jocelin assures us that Corotick was overtaken by the divine vengeance. St Patrick wrote his Confession as a testimony of his mission when he was old. It is solid, full of good sense and piety, expresses an extraordinary

humility and a great desire of martyrdom, and is wrote with spirit. The author was perfectly versed in the holy scriptures. He confesses everywhere his own faults with a sincere humility, and extols the great mercies of God towards him in this world, who had exalted him, though the most undeserving of men; yet, to preserve him in humility, afforded him the advantage of meeting with extreme contempt from others, that is from the heathens. He confesses, for his humiliation, that, among other temptations, he felt a great desire to see again his own country, and to visit the saints of his acquaintance in Gaul, but durst not abandon his people; and says that the Holy Ghost had declared to him that to do it would be criminal. He tells us that a little before he wrote this, he himself and all his companions had been plundered and laid in irons for his having baptized the son of a certain king against the will of his father, but were released after fourteen days. He lived in the daily expectation of such accidents and of martyrdom, but feared nothing, having his hope as a firm anchor fixed in heaven, and reposing himself with an entire confidence in the arms of the Almighty. He says that he had lately baptized a very beautiful young lady of quality, who some days after came to tell him that she had been admonished by an angel to consecrate her virginity to Jesus Christ, that she might render herself the more acceptable to God. He gave God thanks, and she made her vows with extraordinary fervour six days before he wrote this letter.

St Patrick held several councils to settle the discipline of the church which he had planted. The first, the acts of which are extant under his name in the editions of the councils, is certainly genuine. Its canons regulate several points of discipline, especially relating to penance. St Bernard and the tradition of the country testify that St Patrick fixed his metropolitan see at Armagh. He established some other bishops, as appears by his Council and other monuments. He not only converted the whole country by his preaching and wonderful miracles, but also cultivated this vineyard with so fruitful a benediction and increase from heaven as to render Ireland a most flourishing garden in the church of God and a country of saints. And those nations which had for many ages esteemed all others barbarians did not blush to receive from the utmost extremity of the uncivilized or barbarous world their most renowned teachers and guides in the greatest of all sciences, that of the saints.

Many particulars are related of the labours of St Patrick, which we pass over. In the first year of his mission he attempted to preach Christ in the general assembly of the kings and states of all Ireland, held yearly at Taraghe, or Themoria, in East-Meath, the residence of the chief king, styled the monarch of the whole island, and the principal seat of the Druids or priests, and their paganish rites. The son of Neill, the chief monarch, declared himself against the preacher; however, he converted



several, and, on his road to that place, the father of St Benen, or Benignus, his immediate successor in the see of Armagh. He afterwards converted and baptized the Kings of Dublin and Munster, and the seven sons of the King of Connaught, with the greatest part of their subjects, and before his death almost the whole island. He founded a monastery at Armagh; another called Domnach-Padraig, or Patrick's Church; also a third, named Sabhal-Padraig, and filled the country with churches and schools of piety and learning; the reputation of which, for the three succeeding centuries, drew many foreigners into Ireland. Nennius, Abbot of Bangor, in 620, in his history of the Britons,<sup>1</sup> published by the learned Thomas Gale, says that St Patrick took that name only when he was ordained bishop, being before called Maun; that he continued his missions over all the provinces of Ireland during forty years; that he restored sight to many blind, health to the sick, and raised nine dead persons to life. He died and was buried at Down, in Ulster. His body was found there in a church of his name in 1185, and translated to another part of the same church. His festival is marked on the 17th of March in the Martyrology of Bede, &c.

The apostles of nations were all interior men, endowed with a sublime spirit of prayer. The salvation of souls being a supernatural end, the instruments ought to bear a proportion to it, and preaching proceed from a grace which is supernatural. To undertake this holy function without a competent stock of sacred learning, and without the necessary precautions of human prudence and industry, would be to tempt God. But sanctity of life and the union of the heart with God are a qualification far more essential than science, eloquence, and human talents.

St Patrick and other apostolic men were dead to themselves and the world, and animated with the spirit of perfect charity and humility, by which they were prepared by God to be such powerful instruments of his grace, as, by the miraculous change of so many hearts, to plant in entire barbarous nations not only the faith, but also the spirit of Christ. Preachers who have not attained to a disengagement and purity of heart suffer the petty interests of self-love secretly to mingle themselves in their zeal and charity, and have reason to suspect that they inflict deeper wounds in their own souls than they are aware, and produce not in others the good which they imagine.

## ST JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

HE was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, but a faithful disciple of Jesus. It was no small proof of his great piety that, though he had riches

<sup>1</sup> C. 55, 56, 57, 58, 61.

and honours to lose, he feared not the malice of men, but at a time when the apostles trembled boldly declared himself a follower of Jesus who was crucified; and with the greatest devotion embalmed and buried his sacred body. This saint was the patron of Glastonbury, where a church and hermitage, very famous in the times of the ancient Britons,<sup>1</sup> were built by the first apostles of this island, among whom some moderns have placed St Joseph himself and Aristobulus.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 17 :*

ST GERTRUDE, Abbess of Nivelles, born 626, daughter of Pepin and of the Blessed Itta, who, as a widow, lived for five years under her daughter's rule : ST JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, a faithful disciple of Jesus, who embalmed and buried His Sacred Body after His crucifixion. Joseph is said to have visited Glastonbury. ST PATRICK : and MANY MARTYRS at Alexandria in the year 392.

### MARCH 18

### ST EDWARD, KING AND MARTYR

HE was monarch of all England, and succeeded his father, the glorious King Edgar, in 975, being thirteen years old. He followed in all things the counsels of St Dunstan; and his ardour in the pursuit of all virtues is not to be expressed. His great love of purity of mind and body, and his fervent devotion, rendered him the miracle of princes, whilst by his modesty, clemency, prudence, charity, and compassion to the poor, he was the blessing and delight of his subjects. His stepmother, Elfrida, had attempted to set him aside that the crown might fall on her own son, Ethelred, then seven years old. Notwithstanding her treasonable practices, and the frequent proofs of her envy and jealousy, Edwin always paid her the most dutiful respect and deference, and treated his brother with the most tender affection. But the fury of her ambition made her insensible to all motives of religion, nature, and gratitude. The young king had reigned three years and a half, when being one day weary with hunting in a forest near Wareham, in Dorsetshire, he paid a visit to his stepmother at Corfesgeate, now Corfe Castle, in the isle of Purbeck, and desired to see his young brother at the door. The treacherous queen caused a servant to stab him in the belly whilst he was stooping out of courtesy, after drinking. The king set spurs to his horse, but fell off dead, on the 18th of March, 979, his bowels being ripped open so as to fall out. His body was plunged deep into a marsh, but discovered by a pillar of light, and honoured by many miraculous cures of sick persons. It was taken up and buried in the church of our Lady at Wareham; but found entire in three years after, and translated to the monastery at Shaftesbury. His lungs were kept at the village called Edwardstow, in 1001; but the chiefest part of his remains were deposited at Wareham,

<sup>1</sup> See Matthew of Westminster, and John of Glastonbury, in their histories of that famous abbey, published by Hearne; also Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*.

as the Saxon Chronicle and Florence of Worcester say: but part was afterwards removed to Shaftesbury, not Glastonbury, as Caxton mistakes. The long thin knife with which he was stabbed was kept in the church of Faversham, before the suppression of the monasteries, as Hearne mentions. His name is placed in the Roman Martyrology. The impious Elfrida, being awakened by the stings of conscience and by the voice of miracles, retired from the world, and built the monasteries of Wherwell and Ambresbury, in the first of which she lived and died in the practice of penance. The reign of her son Ethelred was weak and unfortunate, and the source of the greatest miseries to the kingdom, especially from the Danes. See Malmesbury, Brompton, Abbot of Jorval, in Yorkshire, and Ranulf Higden, in his Polychronicon, published by Gale. Also an old MS. life of the saint, quoted by Hearne, on Langtoft's Chronicle, t. ii. p. 628, and from the MS. lives of saints in the hands of Mr Sheldon, of Weston.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 18 :*

ST ALEXANDER : ST ANSELM, Bishop of Lucca, a native of and patron of Mantua, where he died 1086; a distinguished scholar : ST CYRIL, Archbishop of Jerusalem, died 386 : ST EDWARD, the martyred King of England : ST FRIDIAN, an earlier bishop of Lucca, of Northern Irish extraction : and ST GABRIEL, "one of the seven Spirits that stand before the throne of God." His feast is kept on this date in the dioceses of England, but he is also honoured on March 24, the day preceding the Feast of the Annunciation.

### MARCH 19

### ST JOSEPH

THE glorious St Joseph was lineally descended from the greatest kings of the tribe of Judah, and from the most illustrious of the ancient patriarchs; but his true glory consisted in his humility and virtue. The history of his life hath not been written by men; but his principal actions are recorded by the Holy Ghost himself. God intrusted him with the education of his divine Son, manifested in the flesh. In this view he was espoused to the Virgin Mary. St Jerom assures us<sup>1</sup> that St Joseph always preserved his virgin chastity; and it is of faith that nothing contrary thereto ever took place with regard to his chaste spouse, the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was given her by heaven to be the protector of her chastity, to secure her from calumnies in the birth of the Son of God, and to assist her in his education, and in her journeys, fatigues, and persecutions. How great was the purity and sanctity of him who was chosen the guardian of the most spotless Virgin! This holy man seems, for a considerable time, to have been unacquainted that the great mystery of the Incarnation had been wrought in her by the Holy Ghost. Conscious, therefore, of his own chaste behaviour towards her, it could not but raise a great concern in his breast to find that, notwithstanding the sanctity of

<sup>1</sup> L. adv. Helvid. c. 9.

her deportment, yet he might be well assured that she was with child. But being *a just man*, as the scripture calls him, and consequently possessed of all virtues, especially of charity and mildness towards his neighbour, he was determined to leave her privately, without either condemning or accusing her, committing the whole cause to God. These, his perfect dispositions, were so acceptable to God, the lover of justice, charity, and peace, that before he put his design into execution he sent an angel from heaven, not to reprehend anything in his holy conduct, but to dissipate all his doubts and fears, by revealing to him this adorable mystery.

In the next place we may admire in secret contemplation with what devotion, respect, and tenderness he beheld and adored the first of all men, the new-born Saviour of the world, and with what fidelity he acquitted himself of his double charge, the education of Jesus and the guardianship of his blessed mother. "He was truly the faithful and prudent servant," says St Bernard,<sup>1</sup> "whom our Lord appointed the master of his household, the comfort and support of his mother, his foster-father, and most faithful co-operator in the execution of his deepest counsels on earth." "What a happiness," says the same Father, "not only to see Jesus Christ, but also to hear him: to carry him in his arms, to lead him from place to place, to embrace and caress him, to feed him, and to be privy to all the great secrets which were concealed from the princes of this world!"

Amidst these extraordinary graces, what more wonderful than his humility! He conceals his privileges, lives as the most obscure of men, publishes nothing of God's great mysteries, makes no further inquiries into them, leaving it to God to manifest them at his own time, seeks to fulfil the order of providence in his regard without interfering with anything but what concerns himself. Though descended from the royal family which had long been in the possession of the throne of Judea, he is content with his condition, that of a mechanic or handicraftsman,<sup>2</sup> and makes it his business, by labouring in it, to maintain himself, his spouse, and the divine Child.

We should be ungrateful to this great saint if we did not remember that it is to him, as the instrument under God, that we are indebted for the preservation of the infant Jesus from Herod's jealousy and malice, manifested in the slaughter of the Innocents. An angel appearing to him in his sleep bade him arise, take the child Jesus, and fly with him into Egypt, and remain there till he should again have notice from him

<sup>1</sup> Hom. ii. super missus est, n. 16, p. 742.

<sup>2</sup> This appears from Mat. xiii. 55. St Justin (Dial. n. 89, ed. Ben. p. 186), St Ambrose (in Luc. p. 3) and Theodoret (b. iii. Hist. c. 18) say he worked in wood, as a carpenter. St Hilary (in Mat. c. 14, p. 17) and St Peter Chrysologus (Serm. 48) say he wrought in iron as a smith; probably he wrought both in iron and in wood; which opinion St Justin favours, by saying: "He and Jesus made ploughs and yokes for oxen."

to return. This sudden and unexpected flight must have exposed Joseph to many inconveniences and sufferings in so long a journey, with a little babe and a tender virgin, the greater part of the way being through deserts and among strangers; yet he alleges no excuses, nor inquires at what time they were to return. St Chrysostom observes that God treats thus all his servants, sending them frequent trials to clear their hearts from the rust of self-love, but intermixing seasons of consolation.<sup>1</sup> "Joseph," says he, "is anxious on seeing the Virgin with child; an angel removes that fear; he rejoices at the child's birth, but a great fear succeeds; the furious king seeks to destroy the child, and the whole city is in an uproar to take away his life. This is followed by another joy—the adoration of the Magi; a new sorrow then arises; he is ordered to fly into a foreign unknown country, without help or acquaintance." It is the opinion of the Fathers that upon their entering Egypt, at the presence of the child Jesus all the oracles of that superstitious country were struck dumb, and the statues of their gods trembled, and in many places fell to the ground, according to that of Isaiah xix.: "And the statues of the Egyptians shall be shaken in his presence."<sup>2</sup> The Fathers also attribute to this holy visit the spiritual benediction poured on that country, which made it for many ages most fruitful in saints.<sup>3</sup>

After the death of King Herod, which was notified to St Joseph by a vision, God ordered him to return with the child and his mother into the land of Israel, which our saint readily obeyed. But when he arrived in Judea, hearing that Archelaus succeeded Herod in that part of the country, apprehensive he might be infected with his father's vices—cruelty and ambition—he feared on that account to settle there, as he would otherwise probably have done, for the more commodious education of the child. And therefore, being directed by God in another vision, he retired into the dominions of his brother Herod Antipas, in Galilee, to his former habitation in Nazareth, where the wonderful occurrences of our Lord's birth were less known. St Joseph being a strict observer of the Mosaic law, in conformity to its direction annually repaired to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover. Archelaus being banished by Augustus and Judea made a Roman province, he had now nothing more to fear at Jerusalem. Our Saviour being advanced to the twelfth year of his age, accompanied his parents thither; who, having performed the usual ceremonies of the feast, were now returning with many of their neighbours and acquaintances towards Galilee, and, never doubting but that Jesus had joined himself with some of the company, they travelled on for a whole day's journey without further inquiry after him before they discovered

<sup>1</sup> Hom. viii. in Mat. t. vii. p. 123, ed. Ben.

<sup>2</sup> This is affirmed by St Athanasius (l. de Incarn.); Eusebius (Demonstrat. Evang. lib. vi. c. 20); St Cyril (Cat. 10); St Ambrose (in Ps. cxviii. Octon. 5); St Jerom (in Isai. xix.); St Chrysostom; St Cyril of Alexandria (in Isai.); Sozomen (lib. v. c. 20), &c.

<sup>3</sup> See the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.

that he was not with them. But when night came on, and they could hear no tidings of him among their kindred and acquaintance, they, in the deepest affliction, returned with the utmost speed to Jerusalem; where, after an anxious search of three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the learned doctors of the law, hearing them discourse, and asking them such questions as raised the admiration of all that heard him, and made them astonished at the ripeness of his understanding: nor were his parents less surprised on this occasion. And when his mother told him with what grief and earnestness they had sought him, and to express her sorrow for that, though short, privation of his presence, said to him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I sought thee in great affliction of mind": she received for answer that, being the Messias and Son of God, sent by his Father into the world in order to redeem it, he must be about his Father's business, the same for which he had been sent into the world; and therefore that it was most likely for them to find him in his Father's house: intimating that his appearing in public on this occasion was to advance his Father's honour, and to prepare the princes of the Jews to receive him for the Messias; pointing out to them from the prophets the time of his coming. But though in thus staying in the temple, unknown to his parents, he did something without their leave, in obedience to his heavenly Father, yet in all other things he was obedient to them, returning with them to Nazareth, and there living in all dutiful subjection to them.

Aelred, our countryman, Abbot of Rieval, in his sermon on losing the child Jesus in the temple, observes that this his conduct to his parents is a true representation of that which he shows us, whilst he often withdraws himself for a short time from us to make us seek him the more earnestly. This mystery is an emblem of the devout soul, and Jesus sometimes withdrawing himself, and leaving her in dryness, that she may be more earnest in seeking him. But, above all, how eagerly ought the soul which has lost God by sin to seek him again, and how bitterly ought she to deplore her extreme misfortune!

As no further mention is made of St Joseph, he must have died before the marriage of Cana and the beginning of our divine Saviour's ministry. We cannot doubt but he had the happiness of Jesus and Mary attending at his death, praying by him, assisting and comforting him in his last moments: whence he is particularly invoked for the great grace of a happy death, and the spiritual presence of Jesus in that tremendous hour. The church reads the history of the Patriarch Joseph on his festival, who was styled the saviour of Egypt, which he delivered from perishing by famine; and was appointed the faithful master of the household of Potiphar, and of that of Pharaoh and his kingdom. But our great saint was chosen by God the saviour of the life of him who was the true Saviour of the

souls of men, rescuing him from the tyranny of Herod. He is now glorified in heaven, as the guardian and keeper of his Lord on earth. As Pharaoh said to the Egyptians in their distress, "Go to Joseph"; so may we confidently address ourselves to the mediation of him, to whom God, made man, was subject and obedient on earth.

The devout Gerson expressed the warmest devotion to St Joseph, which he endeavoured by letters and sermons to promote. He composed an office in his honour, and wrote his life in twelve poems, called Josephina. He enlarges on all the circumstances of his life by pious affections and meditations. St Teresa chose him the chief patron of her order. In the sixth chapter of her life she writes thus: "I chose the glorious St Joseph for my patron, and I commend myself in all things singularly to his intercession. I do not remember ever to have asked of God anything by him which I did not obtain. I never knew anyone who, by invoking him, did not advance exceedingly in virtue; for he assists in a wonderful manner all who address themselves to him." St Francis of Sales, throughout his whole nineteenth entertainment, extremely recommends devotion to him, and extols his merits, principally his virginity, humility, constancy, and courage. The Syrians and other eastern churches celebrate his festival on the 20th of July; the western church on the 19th of March. Pope Gregory XV in 1621, and Urban VIII in 1642, commanded it to be kept a holiday of obligation.

The holy family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph presents to us the most perfect model of heavenly conversation on earth. How did those two seraphim, Mary and Joseph, live in their poor cottages! They always enjoyed the presence of Jesus, always burning with the most ardent love for him, inviolably attached to his sacred person, always employed and living only for him. O heavenly life! O anticipation of the heavenly bliss! O divine conversation! We may imitate them, and share some degree of this advantage, by conversing often with Jesus, and by the contemplation of his most amiable goodness, kindling the fire of his holy love in our breasts. The effects of this love, if it be sincere, will necessarily appear in our putting on his spirit, and imitating his example and virtues.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 19:*

ST ALCMUND, martyr, son and brother of Northumbrian kings. "The greater he was in power, the more meek and humble he was in his heart and the more affable to others. He was poor amidst riches, because he knew no greater pleasure than to strip himself for the relief of the distressed": and ST JOSEPH, Patron of the Universal Church.

MARCH 20

## ST CUTHBERT, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF LINDISFARNE

(A.D. 687)

[From his life written by Bede, and from that author's Church History, b. iv. c. 27 to c. 32. Simeon Dunelm, or rather Turgot, Hist. Dunelm, published by Bedford: the old Latin hymn On St Cuthbert, MS. in Bibl. Cotton. n. 41, apud Wanley, p. 184, and four Latin prayers, in honour of St Cuthbert, MS. n. 190, in the library of Durham church. Warmley, Catal. t. ii. p. 297. Harpsfield, sæc. 7, c. 34. Hearne on Langtoft, t. ii. p. 687. N.B.—The history of Durham, which is here quoted, was compiled by Turgot, Prior of Durham, down to the year 1104, and continued to the year 1161 by Simeon.]

WHEN the Northumbrians, under the pious King Oswald, had, with great fervour, embraced the Christian faith, the holy Bishop St Aidan founded two monasteries, that of Mailros, on the bank of the Tweed, and another in the isle of Lindisfarne, afterwards called Holy Island, four miles distant from Berwick. In both he established the rule of St Columba; and usually resided himself in the latter. St Cuthbert<sup>1</sup> was born not very far from Mailros, and in his youth was much edified by the devout deportment of the holy inhabitants of that house, whose fervour in the service of God, and the discharge of the duties of a monastic life, he piously endeavoured to imitate on the mountains where he kept his father's sheep. It happened, one night, that whilst he was watching in prayer, near his flock, according to his custom, he saw the soul of St Aidan carried up to heaven by angels at the very instant that holy man departed this life in the isle of Lindisfarne. Serious reflections on the happiness of such a death determined the pious young man to repair, without delay, to Mailros, where he put on the monastic habit whilst Eata was abbot and St Boisil prior. He studied the holy scriptures under the latter, and in fervour surpassed all his brethren in every monastic exercise. Eata being called to govern the new monastery of Rippon, founded by King Alcfrid, he took with him St Cuthbert, and committed to him the care of entertaining strangers; which charge is usually the most dangerous in a religious state. Cuthbert washed the feet of others and served them with wonderful humility and meekness, always remembering that Christ himself is served in his members: and he was most careful that the functions of Martha should never impair his spirit of recollection. When St Wilfred was made Abbot of Rippon, St Cuthbert returned with Eata to Mailros; and St Boisil dying of the great pestilence, in 664, he was chosen provost or prior in his place.

In this station, not content by word and example to form his monks to perfect piety, he laboured assiduously among the people to bring them off from several heathenish customs and superstitious practices which still obtained among them. For this purpose, says our venerable historian, he often went out, sometimes on horseback, but oftener on foot, to preach the way of life to such as were gone astray. Parochial churches being at

<sup>1</sup> Cuthbert signifies Illustrious for skill; or Guthbertus, Worthy of God.



this time very scarce in the country, it was the custom for the country people to flock about a priest or ecclesiastical person when he came into any village, for the sake of his instructions; hearkening willingly to his words, and more willingly practising the good lessons he taught them. St Cuthbert excelled all others by a most persuasive and moving eloquence; and such a brightness appeared in his angelical face in delivering the word of God to the people, that none of them durst conceal from him any part of their misbehaviour, but all laid their conscience open before him, and endeavoured by his injunctions and counsels to expiate the sins they had confessed by worthy fruits of penance. He chiefly visited those villages and hamlets at a distance, which, being situate among high and craggy mountains, and inhabited by the most rustic, ignorant, and savage people, were the less frequented by other teachers. After St Cuthbert had lived many years at Mailros, St Eata, Abbot also of Lindisfarne, removed him thither, and appointed him prior of that larger monastery. By the perfect habit of mortification and prayer the saint had attained to so eminent a spirit of contemplation that he seemed rather an angel than a man. He often spent whole nights in prayer, and sometimes, to resist sleep, worked or walked about the island whilst he prayed. If he heard others complain that they had been disturbed in their sleep, he used to say that he should think himself obliged to anyone that awaked him out of his sleep, that he might sing the praises of his Creator, and labour for his honour. His very countenance excited those who saw him to a love of virtue. He was so much addicted to compunction, and inflamed with heavenly desires, that he could never say mass without tears. He often moved penitents, who confessed to him their sins, to abundant tears by the torrents of his own, which he shed for them. His zeal in correcting sinners was always sweetened with tender charity and meekness. The saint had governed the monastery of Lindisfarne, under his abbot, several years, when earnestly aspiring to a closer union with God, he retired, with his abbot's consent, into the little isle of Farne, nine miles from Lindisfarne, there to lead an austere eremitical life. The place was then uninhabited, and afforded him neither water, tree, nor corn. Cuthbert built himself a hut with a wall and trench about it, and, by his prayers, obtained a well of fresh water in his own cell. Having brought with him instruments of husbandry, he sowed first wheat, which failed; then barley, which, though sowed out of season, yielded a plentiful crop. He built a house at the entry of the island from Lindisfarne, to lodge the brethren that came to see him, whom he there met and entertained with heavenly conferences. Afterwards he confined himself within his own wall and trench, and gave spiritual advice only through a window, without ever stirring out of his cell. He could not, however, refuse an interview with the holy abbess and royal virgin Elfleda, whom her father, King Oswi,

had dedicated to God from her birth, and who, in 680, succeeded St Hilda in the government of the abbey of Whitby. This was held in the isle of Cocket, then filled with holy anchorets. This close solitude was to our saint an uninterrupted exercise of divine love, praise, and compunction, in which he enjoyed a paradise of heavenly delights unknown to the world.

In a synod of bishops held by St Theodorus, at Twiford, on the river Alne, in the kingdom of Northumberland, it was resolved that Cuthbert should be raised to the episcopal see of Lindisfarne. But as neither letters nor messengers were of force to obtain his consent to undertake the charge, King Egfrid, who had been present at the council, and the holy Bishop Trumwin, with many others, sailed over to his island, and conjured him, on their knees, not to refuse his labours, which might be attended with so much advantage to souls. Their remonstrances were so pressing that the saint could not refuse going with them, at least to the council, but weeping most bitterly. He received the episcopal consecration at York, the Easter following, from the hands of St Theodorus, assisted by six other bishops. In this new dignity the saint continued the practice of his former austerities; but remembering what he owed to his neighbour, he went about preaching and instructing with incredible fruit, and without any intermission. He made it everywhere his particular care to exhort, feed, and protect the poor. By divine revelation he saw and mentioned to others, at the very instant it happened, the overthrow and death of King Egfrid by the Picts in 685. He cured, by water which he had blessed, the wife of a noble thane who lay speechless and senseless at the point of death, and many others. For his miracles he was called the *Thaumaturgus* of Britain. But the most wonderful of his miracles was that which grace wrought in him by the perfect victory which it gave him over his passions. His zeal for justice was most ardent; but nothing seemed ever to disturb the peace and serenity of his mind. By the close union of his soul with God, whose will alone he sought and considered in all things, he overlooked all temporal events, and under all accidents his countenance was always cheerful, always the same; particularly in bearing all bodily pains, and every kind of adversity with joy, he was invincible. His attention to, and pure view of God in all events, and in all his actions, arose from the most tender and sweet love, which was in his soul a constant source of overflowing joy. Prayer was his centre. His brethren discovered sometimes that he spent three or four nights together in that heavenly exercise, allowing himself very little or no sleep. When St Ebba, the royal virgin, sister to the Kings St Oswald and Oswi, abbess of the double monastery of Coldingham, invited him to edify that house by his exhortations, he complied, and stayed there some days. In the night, whilst others were asleep, he stole out to his devotions, according to his custom in other places. One of the monks, who watched

and followed him one night, found that the saint, going down to the sea-shore, went into the water up to the arm-pits, and there sung praises to God. In this manner he passed the silent time of the night. Before the break of day he came out, and having prayed awhile on the sands, returned to the monastery, and was ready to join in morning lauds.

St Cuthbert, foreseeing his death to approach, resigned his bishopric, which he had held two years, and retired to his solitude in Farne Island, to prepare himself for his last passage. Two months after he fell sick, and permitted Herefrid, the Abbot of Lindisfarne, who came to visit him, to leave two of his monks to attend him in his last moments. He received the Viaticum of the body and blood of Christ from the hands of the Abbot Herefrid at the hour of midnight prayer, and immediately lifting up his eyes, and stretching out his hands, sweetly slept in Christ on the 20th day of March, 687. He died in the island of Farne; but, according to his desire, his body was buried in the monastery of Saint Peter, in Lindisfarne, on the right side of the high altar. Bede relates many miracles performed at his tomb; and adds that eleven years after his death, the monks taking up his body, instead of dust which they expected, found it unputrified, with the joints pliable, and the clothes fresh and entire.<sup>1</sup> They put it into a new coffin, placed above the pavement over the former grave; and several miracles were there wrought, even by touching the clothes which covered the coffin. William of Malmesbury<sup>2</sup> writes that the body was again found incorrupt four hundred and fifteen years afterwards at Durham, and publicly shown. In the Danish invasions, the monks carried it away from Lindisfarne, and, after several removals on the continent, settled with their treasure on a woody hill almost surrounded by the river Were, formed by nature for a place of defence. They built there a church of stone, which Aldhune, Bishop of Lindisfarne, dedicated in 995, and placed in it the body of St Cuthbert with great solemnity, transferring hither his episcopal see. Many princes enriched exceedingly the new monastery and cathedral in honour of St Cuthbert. Succeeding kings, out of devotion to this saint, declared the bishop a count palatine, with an extensive civil jurisdiction. The great King Alfred, who honoured St Cuthbert as his particular patron, and ascribed to his intercession some of his greatest victories and other blessings which he received, was a special benefactor to this church.<sup>3</sup> The present cathedral was built in 1080. When the shrine of the saint was plundered and demolished by the order of King Henry VIII, the body of St Cuthbert, which was found still entire, as Harpsfield testifies, met with greater regard than many others; for it was not burnt, as were those of St Edmund, king and martyr, St Thomas, and others. After the king's officers had

<sup>1</sup> Bede, Hist. b. iv. c. 30.

<sup>2</sup> L. 4, Pontif. Angl.

<sup>3</sup> See Hickee, Thes. Ling. Septentr. Prof. p. 8.

carried away the plunder of his shrine, it was privately buried under the place where the shrine before stood, though the spot is now unknown. His ring, in which a sapphire is encased, was given by Lord Viscount Montaigne to the Bishop of Chalcedon,<sup>1</sup> who had long been sheltered from the persecution in the house of that nobleman, and was by him left in the monastery of English canonesses at Paris, which is also possessed of a tooth of St Cuthbert. A copy of St John's gospel, which, after the example of his master, St Boisil, he often read to nourish the fire of divine love in his soul, was put into his coffin when he was buried, and found in his tomb. It afterwards passed into the possession of Mr Thomas Philips, canon of Tongres, on whom the Earl of Litchfield bestowed it. The copy is judged undoubtedly genuine by our ablest Protestant antiquaries, who carefully examined it.

The life of St Cuthbert was almost a continual prayer. There was no business, no company, no place, how public soever, which did not afford him an opportunity, and even a fresh motive, to pray. Not content to pass the day in this exercise, he continued it constantly for several hours of the night, which was to him a time of light and interior delights. Whatever he saw seemed to speak to him of God, and to invite him to his love. His conversation was on God, or heavenly things, and he would have regretted a single moment which had not been employed with God, or for his honour, as utterly lost. The inestimable riches which he found in God showed him how precious every moment is, in which he had it in his power to enjoy the divine converse. The immensity of God, who is present in us and in all creatures, and whom millions of worlds cannot confine or contain; his eternity, to which all time coexists, and which has neither beginning, end, nor succession; the unfathomed abyss of his judgments; the sweetness of his providence; his adorable sanctity; his justice, wisdom, goodness, mercy, and love, especially as displayed in the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation, and in the doctrine, actions, and sufferings of our Blessed Redeemer; in a word, all the incomprehensible attributes of the Divinity, and the mysteries of his grace and mercy, successively filled his mind and heart, and kindled in his soul the most sweet and ardent affections, in which his thirst and his delight, which were always fresh and always insatiable, gave him a kind of anticipated taste of paradise. For holy contemplation discovers to a soul a new most wonderful world, whose beauty, riches, and pure delights astonish and transport her out of herself.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 20 :*

ST CUTHBERT : ST WULFRAN, Archbishop of Sens and Apostolic Missionary in Friseland, famed for many miracles. His mother was St Bathildes, and in his youth he spent some years at the court of Clotaire III. He resigned his archbishopric in 684 (or 685 ?) and entered Friseland as a poor missionary priest, to convert the heathens. It was the example of some zealous English preachers that moved him to this.

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<sup>1</sup> Bp. Smith, Flores. Hist. Eccles. p. 120.

MARCH 21

ST BENEDICT, ABBOT, PATRIARCH OF THE  
WESTERN MONKS

(A.D. 543)

SAINT BENEDICT, or BENNET, was a native of Norcia, formerly an episcopal see in Umbria, and was descended from a family of note, and born about the year 480. The name of his father was Eutropius, and that of his grandfather, Justinian. When he was fit for the higher studies, he was sent by his parents to Rome, and there placed in the public schools. He, who till that time knew not what vice was, and trembled at the shadow of sin, was not a little shocked at the licentiousness which he observed in the conduct of some of the Roman youth with whom he was obliged to converse; and he was no sooner come into the world but he resolved to bid an eternal farewell to it, not to be entangled in its snares. He therefore left the city privately, and made the best of his way towards the deserts. His nurse, Cyrilla, who loved him tenderly, followed him as far as Afilum, thirty miles from Rome, where he found means to get rid of her, and pursued his journey alone to the desert mountains of Sublacum,<sup>1</sup> nearly forty miles from Rome. It is a barren, hideous chain of rocks, with a river and lake in the valley. Near this place the saint met a monk of a neighbouring monastery, called Romanus, who gave him the monastic habit, with suitable instructions, and conducted him to a deep narrow cave in the midst of these mountains, almost inaccessible to men. In this cavern, now called the Holy Grotto, the young hermit chose his abode; and Romanus, who kept his secret, brought him hither, from time to time, bread and the like slender provisions, which he retrenched from his own meals, and let them down to the holy recluse with a line, hanging a bell to the cord to give him notice. Bennet seems to have been about fourteen or fifteen years old when he came to Sublacum: St Gregory says he was yet a child. He lived three years in this manner, known only to Romanus. But God was pleased to manifest his servant to men, that he might shine forth as a light to many. In 497, a certain pious priest in that country, whilst he was preparing a dinner for himself on Easter Sunday, heard a voice which said, "You are preparing for yourself a banquet, whilst my servant Bennet, at Sublacum, is distressed with hunger." The priest immediately set out in quest of the hermit, and with much difficulty found him out. Bennet was surprised to see a man come to him; but before he would enter into conversation with him, he desired they might pray together. They then discoursed for some time on God and heavenly things. At length the priest invited the

<sup>1</sup> Called by the Italians, who frequently soften *l* into *i*, Subiaco.

saint to eat, saying it was Easter Day, on which it is not reasonable to fast; though St Bennet answered him that he knew not that it was the day of so great a solemnity: nor is it to be wondered at that one so young should not be acquainted with the day of a festival which was not then observed by all on the same day, or that he should not understand the lunar cycle, which at that time was known by very few. After their repast, the priest returned home. Soon after, certain shepherds discovered the saint near his cave, but at first took him for a wild beast; for he was clad with the skins of beasts, and they imagined no human creature could live among those rocks. When they found him to be a servant of God, they respected him exceedingly, and many of them were moved by his heavenly discourses to embrace with fervour a course of perfection. From that time he began to be known, and many visited him, and brought him such sustenance as he would accept, in requital for which he nourished their souls with spiritual instructions. Though he lived sequestered from the world, he was not yet secure from the assaults of the tempter. Wherever we fly the devil still pursues us, and we carry a domestic enemy within our own breasts. St Gregory relates that whilst St Bennet was employed in divine contemplation, the fiend endeavoured to withdraw his mind from heavenly objects by appearing in the shape of a little black bird; but that, upon his making the sign of the cross, the phantom vanished. After this, by the artifices of this restless enemy, the remembrance of a woman whom the saint had formerly seen at Rome occurred to his mind, and so strongly affected his imagination that he was tempted to leave his desert. But, blushing at so base a suggestion of the enemy, he threw himself upon some briars and nettles which grew in the place where he was, and rolled himself a long time in them, till his body was covered with blood. The wounds of his body stifled all inordinate inclinations, and their smart extinguished the flame of concupiscence. This complete victory seemed to have perfectly subdued that enemy, for he found himself no more molested with its stings.

The fame of his sanctity being spread abroad, it occasioned several to forsake the world and imitate his penitential manner of life. Some time after, the monks of Vicovara, on the death of their abbot, pitched upon him to succeed him. He was very unwilling to take upon him that charge, which he declined in the spirit of sincere humility, the beloved virtue which he had practised from his infancy, and which was the pleasure of his heart, and is the delight of a God humbled, even to the cross, for the love of us. The saint soon found by experience that their manners did not square with his just idea of a monastic state. Certain sons of Belial among them carried their aversion so far as to mingle poison with his wine; but when, according to his custom, before he drank of it he made the sign of the cross over the glass, it broke as if a stone had fallen

upon it. "God forgive you, brethren," said the saint, with his usual meekness and tranquillity of soul; "you now see I was not mistaken when I told you that your manners and mine would not agree." He therefore returned to Sublacum, which desert he soon peopled with monks, for whom he built twelve monasteries, placing in each twelve monks with a superior. In one of these twelve monasteries there lived a monk who, out of sloth, neglected and loathed the holy exercise of mental prayer, insomuch that after the psalmody or divine office was finished, he every day left the church to go to work, whilst his brethren were employed in that holy exercise; for, by this private prayer in the church, after the divine office, St Gregory means pious meditation, as Dom Mege demonstrates. This slothful monk began to correct his fault upon the charitable admonition of Pompeian, his superior; but, after three days, relapsed into his former sloth. Pompeian acquainted St Benedict, who said, "I will go and correct him myself." Such, indeed, was the danger and enormity of this fault as to require the most effectual and speedy remedy. For it is only by assiduous prayer that the soul is enriched with the abundance of the heavenly water of divine graces, which produces in her the plentiful fruit of all virtues. If we consider the example of all the saints, we shall see that prayer was the principal means by which the Holy Ghost sanctified their souls, and that they advanced in perfection in proportion to their progress in the holy spirit of prayer. If this be neglected, the soul becomes spiritually barren, as a garden loses all its fruitfulness and all its beauty if the pump raises not up a continual supply of water, the principle of both. St Benedict, deploring the misfortune and blindness of this monk, hastened to his monastery, and coming to him at the end of the divine office, saw a little black boy leading him by the sleeve out of the church. After two days' prayer, St Maurus saw the same; but Pompeian could not see this vision, by which was represented that the devil studies to withdraw men from prayer in order that, being disarmed and defenceless, they may easily be made a prey. On the third day, St Benedict, finding the monk still absent from church in the time of prayer, struck him with a wand, and by that correction the sinner was freed from the temptation. Dom. German Millet<sup>1</sup> tells us, from the tradition and archives of the monastery of St Scholastica, that this happened in St Jerom's. In the monastery of St John, a fountain sprung up at the prayers of the saint; this, and two other monasteries, which were built on the summit of the mountain, being before much distressed for want of water. In that of St Clement, situate on the bank of a lake, a Goth, who was a monk, let fall the head of a sickle into the water, as he was cutting down thistles and weeds in order to make a garden; but St Maur, who, with St Placidus, lived in that house, holding

<sup>1</sup> See Dom. Mege, p. 84.

the wooden handle in the water, the iron of its own accord swam and joined it again, as St Gregory relates. St Benedict's reputation drew the most illustrious personages from Rome, and other remote parts, to see him. Many who came clad in purple, sparkling with gold and precious stones, charmed with the admirable sanctity of the servant of God, prostrated themselves at his feet to beg his blessing and prayers, and some, imitating the sacrifice of Abraham, placed their sons under his conduct in their most tender age, that they might be formed to perfect virtue from their childhood. Among others, two rich and most illustrious senators, Eutychius (or rather Equitius) and Tertullus, committed to his care their two sons, Maurus, then twelve years old, and Placidus, also a child, in 522. The devil, envying so much good, stirred up his wicked instruments to disturb the tranquillity of the servant of God. Florentius, a priest in the neighbouring country, though unworthy to bear that sacred character, moved by a secret jealousy, persecuted the saint, and aspersed his reputation with grievous slanders. Bennet, being a true disciple of Christ, knew no revenge but that of meekness and silence; and not to inflame the envy of his adversary, left Sublacum, and repaired to Mount Cassino. He had not got far on his journey when he heard that Florentius was killed by the fall of a gallery in which he was. The saint was much afflicted at his sudden and unhappy death, and enjoined Maurus a penance for calling it a deliverance from persecution.

St Bennet met on Mount Cassino one Martin, a venerable old hermit, who, to confine himself to a more austere solitude, had chained himself to the ground in his cell with a long iron chain. The holy abbot, fearing this singularity might be a mark of affectation, said to him, "If you are a servant of Jesus Christ, let the chain of his love, not one of iron, hold you fixed in your resolution." Martin gave proof of his humility by his obedience, and immediately laid aside his chain. St Bennet governed also a monastery of nuns, situate near Mount Cassino, as is mentioned by St Gregory; he founded an abbey of men at Terracina, and sent St Placidus into Sicily to establish another in that island. Though ignorant of secular learning, he was eminently replenished with the Spirit of God, and an experimental science of spiritual things; on which account he is said by St Gregory the Great to have been "learnedly ignorant and wisely unlettered": for the alphabet of this great man is infinitely more desirable than all the empty science of the world, as St Arsenius said of St Antony. St Bennet, possessing perfectly the science of the saints, and being enabled by the Holy Ghost to be the guide of innumerable souls in the most sublime paths of Christian perfection, compiled a monastic rule which, for wisdom and discretion, St Gregory the Great preferred to all other rules, and which was afterwards adopted for some



time by all the monks of the West. It is principally founded on silence, solitude, prayer, humility, and obedience.

St Bennet calls his Order a school in which men learn how to serve God; and his life was to his disciples a perfect model for their imitation, and a transcript of his rule. He often raised the sinking courage of his monks, and baffled the various artifices of the devil, with the sign of the cross; rendered the heaviest stone light in building his monastery, by a short prayer; and, in presence of a multitude of people, raised to life a novice who had been crushed by the fall of a wall at Mount Cassino. He foretold, with many tears, that this monastery should be profaned and destroyed; which happened forty years after, when the Lombards demolished it about the year 580. He added that he had scarce been able to obtain of God that the inhabitants should be saved. It was strictly forbid, by the rule of St Benedict, for any monk to eat out of his monastery, unless he was at such a distance that he could not return home that day; and this rule, says St Gregory, was inviolably observed. Indeed, nothing more dangerously engages monks in the commerce of the world, nothing more enervates in them the discipline of abstinence and mortification, than for them to eat and drink with seculars abroad. St Gregory tells us that St Bennet knew by revelation the fault of one of his monks, who had accepted of an invitation to take some refreshment when he was abroad on business.<sup>1</sup> A messenger who brought the saint a present of two bottles of wine, and had hid one of them, was put in mind by him to beware drinking of the other, in which he afterwards found a serpent. One of the monks, after preaching to the nuns, had accepted of some handkerchiefs from them, which he hid in his bosom; but the saint, upon his return, reproved him for his secret sin against the rule of holy poverty. A novice, standing before him, was tempted with thoughts of pride on account of his birth; the saint discovered what passed in his soul, and bid him make the sign of the cross on his breast.

When Belisarius, the emperor's general, was recalled to Constantinople, Totila, the Arian King of the Goths, invaded and plundered Italy. Having heard wonders of the sanctity of St Bennet, and of his predictions and miracles, he resolved to try whether he was really that wonderful man which he was reported to be. Therefore, as he marched through Campania, in 542, he sent the man of God word that he would pay him a visit. But instead of going in person, he dressed one of his courtiers, named Riggo, in his royal purple robes, and sent him to the monastery, attended by the three principal lords of his court, and a numerous train of pages. St Bennet, who was then sitting, saw him coming to his cell, and cried out to him at some distance, "Put off, my son, those robes which you wear, and which belong not to you." The mock king, being struck with a panic

<sup>1</sup> St Greg. Dial. lib. ii. c. 2; Dom. Mege, p. 180.

for having attempted to impose upon the man of God, fell prostrate at his feet, together with all his attendants. The saint coming up, raised him with his hand; and the officer, returning to his master, related trembling what had befallen him. The king then went himself, but was no sooner come into the presence of the holy abbot but he threw himself on the ground, and continued prostrate till the saint, going to him, obliged him to rise. The holy man severely reprov'd him for the outrages he had committed, and said, "You do a great deal of mischief, and I foresee you will do more. You will take Rome; you will cross the sea, and will reign nine years longer; but death will overtake you in the tenth, when you shall be arraigned before a just God to give an account of your conduct": all which came to pass as St Benedict had foretold him. Totila was seized with fear, and recommended himself to his prayers. From that day the tyrant became more humane; and when he took Naples, shortly after, treated the captives with greater lenity than could be expected of an enemy and a barbarian.<sup>1</sup> When the Bishop of Canusa afterwards said to the saint that Totila would leave Rome a heap of stones, and that it would be no longer inhabited, he answered, "No: but it shall be beaten with storms and earthquakes, and shall be like a tree which withers by the decay of its root." Which prediction St Gregory observes to have been accomplished.

The death of this great saint seems to have happened soon after that of his sister, St Scholastica, and in the year after his interview with Totila. He foretold it to his disciples, and caused his grave to be opened six days before. When this was done, he fell ill of a fever, and on the sixth day would be carried into the chapel, where he received the body and blood of our Lord, and having given his last instructions to his sorrowful disciples, standing, and leaning on one of them, with his hands lifted up, he calmly expired in prayer, on Saturday, the 21st of March, probably in the year 543, and of his age the sixty-third, having spent fourteen years at Mount Cassino. The greatest part of his relics remains still in that abbey, though some of his bones were brought into France about the close of the seventh century and deposited in the famous abbey of Fleury, which, on that account, has long borne the name of St Bennet's on the Loire. It was founded in the reign of Clovis II about the year 640, and belongs at present to the Congregation of St Maur.

St Gregory, in two words, expresses the characteristical virtue of this glorious patriarch of the monastic order when he says that, returning from Vicovara to Sublaco, he dwelt alone with himself;<sup>2</sup> which words comprise a great and rare perfection, in which consists the essence of holy retirement. A soul dwells not in true solitude unless this be interior as

<sup>1</sup> Procop. lib. iii. de Bello Gothico; Beronius, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Habitavit secum.

well as exterior, and unless she cultivates no acquaintance but with God and herself, admitting no other company. Many dwell in monasteries or alone without possessing the secret of living with themselves. The twelve degrees of humility which he lays down in his Rule<sup>1</sup> are commended by St Thomas Aquinas.<sup>2</sup> The first is a deep compunction of heart, and holy fear of God and his judgments, with a constant attention to walk in the divine presence, sunk under the weight of this confusion and fear. 2. The perfect renunciation of our own will. 3. Ready obedience. 4. Patience under all sufferings and injuries. 5. The manifestation of our thoughts and designs to our superior or director. 6. To be content, and to rejoice, in all humiliations; to be pleased with mean employments, poor clothes, &c.; to love simplicity and poverty (which he will have among monks to be extended even to the ornaments of the altar); and to judge ourselves unworthy and bad servants in every thing that is enjoined us. 7. Sincerely to esteem ourselves baser and more unworthy than everyone, even the greatest sinners. 8. To avoid all love of singularity in words or actions. 9. To love and practise silence. 10. To avoid dissolute mirth and loud laughter. 11. Never to speak with a loud voice, and to be modest in our words. 12. To be humble in all our exterior actions, by keeping our eyes humbly cast down with the publican<sup>3</sup> and the penitent Manasses.<sup>4</sup> St Benedict adds that divine love is the sublime recompense of sincere humility, and promises, upon the warrant of the divine word, that God will raise that soul to perfect charity which, faithfully walking in these twelve degrees, shall have happily learned true humility. Elsewhere he calls obedience with delay the first degree of humility,<sup>5</sup> but means the first among the exterior degrees; for he places before it interior compunction of soul, and the renunciation of our own will.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 21 :*

ST BENEDICT: ST ENNA or Endeus, Abbot, a native of Ulster and Lord of Ergall; a brother of St Fanchea: and three SAINTS SERAPION, all belonging to Egypt: (1) St SERAPION, Abbot of Arsinoe in Upper Egypt, who governed ten thousand monks dispersed in the desert and monasteries around that place: St SERAPION, Bishop of Thmuis, called "the Scholastic," because of his great learning, sacred and profane: and St SERAPION, called "The Sindonite" from the single garment of coarse linen he always wore.

## MARCH 22

### ST CATHARINE OF SWEDEN, VIRGIN

SHE was daughter of Ulpho, prince of Nericia, in Sweden, and of St Bridget. The love of God seemed almost to prevent in her the use of her reason. At seven years of age she was placed in the nunnery of

<sup>1</sup> St Bened. Reg. c. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Orat. ejus inter Apocryph.

<sup>2</sup> St Thos. ii. 2, qu. 161, a. 6.

<sup>5</sup> St Bened. Reg. c. 5, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xviii. 18.

Risburgh, and educated in piety under the care of the holy abbess of that house. Being very beautiful, she was, by her father, contracted in marriage to Egard, a young nobleman of great virtue; but the virgin persuaded him to join with her in making a mutual vow of perpetual chastity. By her discourses he became desirous only of heavenly graces, and to draw them down upon his soul more abundantly he readily acquiesced in the proposal. The happy couple, having but one heart and one desire, by a holy emulation excited each other to prayer, mortification, and works of charity. After the death of her father, St Catharine, out of devotion to the passion of Christ, and to the relics of the martyrs, accompanied her mother in her pilgrimages and practices of devotion and penance. After her death at Rome, in 1373, Catharine returned to Sweden, and died Abbess of Vadstena, or Vatzén, on the 24th of March, in 1381. For the last twenty-five years of her life she every day purified her soul by a sacramental confession of her sins. Her name stands in the Roman Martyrology on the 22nd of March. See her life written by Ulpho, a Brigittine friar, thirty years after her death, with the remarks of Henschenius.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 22 :*

ST BASIL of Ancyra : ST CATHERINE of Sweden : ST DEOGRATIUS, Bishop of Carthage, who sold even the gold and silver vessels of the church to redeem the captives of Genseric when he plundered Rome : ST LEA, widow, a rich Roman, who after her widowhood led a life of prayer. St Jerome praises her happy death : ST PAUL, Bishop of Narbonne, sent from Rome to plant the faith in Gaul.

### MARCH 23

## ST ALPHONSUS TURIBIUS, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF LIMA

(A.D. 1606)

[From his life by F. Cyprian de Herrera, dedicated to Pope Clement X, and the acts of his canonization.]

ST TORIBIO, or TURIBIUS ALPHONSUS MOGROBEJO, was second son to the lord of Mogrobejo, and born in the kingdom of Leon, on the 16th of November, in 1538. From his infancy he discovered a strong inclination to piety; and in his childhood it was his delight, at times of recreation, to erect and adorn altars, and to serve the poor. He trembled at the very shadow of sin. One day, seeing a poor pedler woman angry because she had lost something out of her pack, he most movingly entreated and exhorted her that she would not offend God by passion; and, in order to appease her, gave her the value of her loss, which he had begged of his mother for that purpose. He was very devout to the Blessed Virgin, said every day her office and rosary, and fasted every Saturday in her honour. Whilst at school, he usually gave part of his slender dinner to

the poor, and was so much addicted to fasting that his superiors were obliged, by strict commands, to compel him to moderate his austerities. He began his higher studies at Valladolid, but completed them at Salamanca. He was introduced early to the notice of King Philip II, honoured by him with several dignities, and made president or chief judge at Granada. This office he discharged during five years with so much integrity, prudence, and virtue that the eyes of the whole kingdom were fixed on him, and his life in the world was a holy noviceship to the pastoral charge. The pressing necessities of the infant church of Peru required a prelate who inherited, in a distinguished manner, the spirit of the apostles; and the archbishopric of Lima falling vacant, Turibius was unanimously judged the person of all others the best qualified to be an apostle of so large a country, and to remedy the scandals which obstructed the conversion of the infidels. The king readily nominated him to that dignity, and all parties concerned applauded the choice. Turibius was thunderstruck at this unexpected news, and had no sooner received the message but he cast himself on the ground at the foot of his crucifix, praying, with many tears, that God would deliver him from so heavy a burden, which he thought absolutely above his strength.

After a suitable preparation, he received the four minor orders on four successive Sundays, the better to dispose himself for the functions of each; and after passing through the other orders, he was consecrated bishop. Immediately after which he set out for Peru, and landed at Lima, in the year 1581, of his age the forty-third. That diocese is extended one hundred and thirty leagues along the coast, comprising three cities and many towns and villages, with innumerable cottages scattered over two ridges of the mountains of the Andes, esteemed the highest and the most rugged in the whole world. Civil wars and dissensions completed the misfortune of that country; and covetousness, cruelty, treachery, fraud, and debauchery seemed triumphant. Nor were the repeated orders of the Spanish court able to redress these evils. The sight of these disorders moved the good pastor often to tears, but his prudence and zeal overcame all difficulties, extirpated public scandals, and made the kingdom a flourishing portion of the Christian church. Upon his arrival, he immediately began a visitation of his vast diocese—an undertaking of incredible fatigue, and attended with many dangers. He often crept over the steepest and most rugged mountains, covered with ice or snow, to visit some poor hut of Indians, and give them suitable comfort and instruction. He travelled often on foot, and sometimes barefoot, and by fasting and prayer never ceased to implore the divine mercy for the salvation of the souls committed to his charge. He placed everywhere able and zealous pastors, and took care that no one in the most remote corners of the rocks should be left destitute of the means

of instruction and of the benefit of the sacraments. But by the arms of meekness and patience he overcame all affronts and injuries, and with an invincible constancy he maintained the rights of justice and truth. He showed that many sinners misconstrued the law of God to make it favour their passions; but that, as Tertullian observes, "Christ calls himself the truth, not custom," and will weigh our actions not in the false balance of the world, but in the true scales of the sanctuary. Thus he extirpated the most inveterate abuses, and established with so great fervour the pure maxims of the gospel, as to revive in many the primitive spirit of Christianity. To extend and perpetuate the advantages of religion, which by his zeal he had procured, he filled this country with seminaries, churches, and many hospitals; but would never suffer his own name to be recorded in any of his munificent charities or foundations. When he was at Lima, he every day visited several hospitals, comforted and exhorted the sick, and administered the sacraments. When a pestilence, though that calamity is seldom known in Peru, raged in some parts of his diocese, Turibius distributed his own necessities in relieving the afflicted: he preached penance, because sins are the cause of chastisements, and infinitely the worst of evils. He walked in the processions, bathed in tears, with his eyes always fixed on a crucifix, and offering himself to God for his flock; fasted, watched, and prayed for them without intermission, till God was pleased to remove the scourge.

Nothing gave the saint so much pleasure as the greatest labours and dangers, to procure the least spiritual advantage to one soul. Burning with the most vehement desire of laying down his life for his flock, and of suffering all things for him who died for us, he feared no dangers. When he heard that poor Indians wandered in the mountains and deserts, he sought them out; and to comfort, instruct, or gain one of them he often suffered incredible fatigues and dangers in the wildernesses, and boldly travelled through the haunts of lions and tigers.<sup>1</sup> He spent seven years in performing his first visitation; his second employed him four years, but the third was shorter. He converted innumerable infidels, and left everywhere monuments of his charity. In travelling, he either prayed or discoursed on heavenly things. On his arrival at a place, it was his custom to repair first to the church to pray before the altar. To catechise the poor, he would sometimes stay two or three days in places where he had neither bed nor any kind of food. He visited every part of his vast diocese, and when others suggested to him the dangers that threatened him from rocks, precipices, marshes, rivers, robbers, and savages, his answer was that Christ came from heaven to save man, we ought not therefore to fear dangers for the sake of immortal glory. He preached and catechised without intermission, having for this purpose learned, in

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, Pumas and Jaguars.

his old age, all the various languages of the barbarous nations of that country. Even on his journeys he said mass every day with wonderful fervour and devotion. He always made a long meditation before and after it, and usually went to confession every morning; though they who best knew his interior testified that they were persuaded he had never in his whole life forfeited his baptismal innocence by any mortal sin. The flourishing state of the church of Peru, the great numbers of saints and eminent pastors with which it abounded, and the establishment of innumerable seminaries of piety and learning, and hospitals for the poor, were the fruit of his zeal. If he did not originally plant the faith, he was at least the great propagator of it, and the chief instrument of God in removing scandals and advancing true piety in that vast country, which till then had been a land of abominations: whilst Francis of Toledo, the great viceroy, first settled the civil government in peace and tranquillity by salutary laws, which have procured him the title of the Legislator of Peru. St Turibius, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, in 1606, during the visitation of his diocese, fell sick at Santa, a town one hundred and ten leagues distant from Lima. He foretold his death, and ordered him to be rewarded who should bring him the first account from his physician that his recovery was despaired of. The ardour of his faith, his hope, his love of his Creator and Redeemer, his resignation, and perfect sacrifice of himself, gathered strength in the fervent exercises and aspirations which he repeated almost without ceasing in his illness. By his last will he ordered what he had about him to be distributed among his servants, and whatever else he otherwise possessed to be given to the poor. He would be carried to the church, there to receive the holy Viaticum, but received extreme unction in his sick bed. He often repeated those words of St Paul, "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ"; and in his last moments he ordered to be sung by his bedside those of the Psalmist, "I rejoiced in the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord." He died on the 23rd of March, repeating those other words of the same prophet, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." His body being translated the year after to Lima, was found incorrupt, the joints flexible, and the skin soft. His historian, and the acts of the canonization, mention many sick restored to their health, and a girl raised to life by him whilst he was living; also many miracles wrought through his intercession after his death. He was beatified by Innocent XI in 1679,<sup>1</sup> and solemnly canonized by Pope Benedict XIII in 1726. On the miracles wrought by his intercession, see Benedict XIV,<sup>2</sup> and especially the acts of his canonization.

A pastor of souls must be careful to animate all his exterior actions and labours in the service of his neighbour with the interior spirit of

<sup>1</sup> Bened. XIV; De Beatif. et Canoniz. lib. i. Append. p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> De Servor. Dei Canoniz. Romæ, 1738, fol. t. iv.; Tr. de Miraculis, c. xvi. p. 196.

compunction, humility, zeal, charity, and tender devotion. Without this he loses the fruit of all the pains he takes, and by them will often deserve only chastisements in the world to come; so much will his intention and the affections of his heart be infected with self-love, and depraved by various imperfections, and secret sinister desires, even in the most holy functions. Therefore, a fervent novice, employed in the exercises of an interior life, ought to be a part of the preparation for this state; and in the discharge of his duties, a person ought always to unite contemplation with action, and reserve to himself sufficient time for conversing with God and his own soul, and taking a frequent review of his own interior. Those who are not faithful in thus maintaining and improving in themselves an interior spirit of piety, and in watching with fear and compunction over the motions of their own hearts, will generally advance very little the kingdom of Christ in the souls of others, and are in great danger of losing their own. This is what St Bernard feared in his disciple Pope Eugenius III, whom he conjured with tears never to give himself up entirely to the care of others, so as not to live also for himself; so to communicate a spirit of piety to others, as not to suffer it to be drained in his own heart; to be a basin to hold it, not a pipe for it to run through.<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 23 :*

ST ALPHONSUS TURIBIUS, Archbishop of Lima : ST EDELWARD, priest : ST JOSEPH ORIOL, 1650-1702, known as "The Thaumaturge of Barcelona." He greatly desired to serve God in the missionary field, but was clearly shown that his work lay in Barcelona. A man of heroic virtue, famed for many miracles : and SAINTS VICTORIAN (Proconsul of Carthage) and other martyrs under the Vandals ; amongst these were twelve children cruelly beaten every day ; but, by God's grace, they persevered to their glorious end.

#### MARCH 24

### ST IRENÆUS, MARTYR, BISHOP OF SIRMIMUM

(A.D. 304)

[From the original authentic acts of his trial in Henschenius, Ruinart, p. 403 :  
Tillemont, t. iv. p. 248 ; Ceillier, t. iii. p. 497.]

ST IRENÆUS, Bishop of Sirmium, capital of part of Pannonia (now Sirmisch, a village in Hungary, twenty-two leagues from Buda to the south), in the persecution of Diocletian was apprehended and conducted before Probus, the governor of Pannonia, who said to him, "The divine laws oblige all men to sacrifice to the gods." Irenæus answered, "Into hell fire shall he be thrown whoever shall sacrifice to the gods." PROBUS. "The edicts of the most clement emperors ordain that all sacrifice to the gods, or suffer according to law." IRENÆUS. "But the law of my God commands me rather to suffer all torments than to sacrifice to the gods." PROBUS. "Either sacrifice or I will put you to the torture." IRENÆUS. "You cannot do me a greater pleasure; for by that means you will make me

<sup>1</sup> Tuus esto ubique ; concha esto, non canalis. S. Bern. l. de Consid.



partake of the sufferings of my Saviour." The proconsul commanded him to be put on the rack, and whilst he was tortured, he said to him, "What do you say now, Irenæus? Will you sacrifice?" IRENÆUS. "I sacrifice to my God by confessing his holy name, and so have I always sacrificed to him." All Irenæus's family was in the utmost concern for him. His mother, his wife, and his children surrounded him. His children embraced his feet, crying out, "Father, dear father, have pity on yourself and on us." His wife, dissolved in tears, cast herself about his neck, and tenderly embracing him, conjured him to preserve himself for her and his innocent children, the pledges of their mutual love. His mother, with a voice broken with sobs, sent forth lamentable cries and sighs, which were accompanied with those of their servants, neighbours, and friends; so that all round the rack on which the martyr was hanging nothing was heard but sobs, groans, and lamentations. Irenæus resisted all these violent assaults, opposing those words of our Lord: "If any one renounce me before men, I will renounce him before my Father who is in Heaven." He made no answer to their pressing solicitations, but raised his soul above all considerations of flesh and blood to him who was looking down on his conflict from above, waiting to crown his victory with immortal glory; and who seemed to cry out to him from his lofty throne in heaven, "Come, make haste to enjoy me." The governor said to him, "Will you be insensible to such marks of tenderness and affection? can you see so many tears shed for you without being moved? It is not beneath a great courage to be touched with compassion. Sacrifice, and do not destroy yourself in the flower of your age." Irenæus said, "It is that I may not destroy myself that I refuse to sacrifice." The governor sent him to prison, where he remained a long time suffering divers torments. At the second time of examination, the governor, after having pressed him to sacrifice, asked him if he had a wife, parents, or children alive. The saint answered all these questions in the negative. "Who then were those that wept for you at your first examination?" Irenæus made answer, "Our Lord Jesus Christ hath said, 'He that loveth father or mother, wife or children, brothers or relations, more than me, is not worthy of me.' So, when I lift up my eyes to contemplate that God whom I adore, and the joys he hath promised to those who faithfully serve him, I forget that I am a father, a husband; a son, a master, a friend." Probus said, "But you do not therefore cease to be so. Sacrifice at least for their sakes." Irenæus replied, "My children will not lose much by my death; for I leave them for father that same God whom they adore with me; so let nothing hinder you from executing the orders of your emperor upon me." PROBUS. "Throw not yourself away. I cannot avoid condemning you." IRENÆUS. "You cannot do me a greater favour, or give me a more agreeable pleasure." Then Probus

passed sentence after this manner: "I order that Irenæus, for disobeying the emperor's commands, be cast into the river."<sup>1</sup> Irenæus replied, "After so many threats, I expected something extraordinary, and you content yourself with drowning me. How comes this? You do me an injury; for you deprive me of the means of showing the world how much Christians, who have a lively faith, despise death, though attended with the most cruel torments." Probus, enraged at this, added to the sentence that he should be first beheaded. Irenæus returned thanks to God, as for a second victory. When arrived on the bridge of Diana, from which he was to be thrown, stripping off his clothes, and lifting up his hands to heaven, he prayed thus, "Lord Jesus Christ, who condescendest to suffer for the salvation of the world, command the heavens to open, that the angels may receive the soul of thy servant Irenæus, who suffers for thy name, and for the people of the Catholic Church of Sirmium." Then, his head being struck off, he was thrown into the river on the 25th of March, on which day his name occurs in the Roman Martyrology. He suffered in the year 304. He was married before he was ordained bishop; but lived continent from that time, as the laws of the church required.

The martyrs most perfectly accomplished the precept of renouncing all things for Christ; but all who desire truly to become his disciples are bound to do it in spirit. Many aspire to perfection by austere practices of exterior mortification and long exercises of devotion, yet make little progress; and, after many years, remain always subject to many imperfections and errors in a spiritual life. The reason is because they neglected to lay the foundation by renouncing themselves. This requires constant watchfulness, courageous self-denial, a perfect spirit of humility, meekness, and obedience, and sincere compunction, in which a soul examines and detects her vices, bewails her past sins and those of the whole world, sighs at the consideration of its vanity and slavery, and of her distance from heaven, labours daily to cleanse her mind from all idle thoughts, and her heart from all sin, all irregular attachments and superfluous desires, flies the vain joys of the world, and often entertains herself on the bloody passion of Christ. If the affections are thus purified, and this cleanness of heart daily more and more cultivated, the rest costs very little, and the soul makes quick progress in the paths of holy love by the assiduous exercises of contemplation and prayer, a constant fidelity in all her actions, and the most fervent and pure attention to the divine will and presence.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 24 :*

ST GABRIEL ("Power of God"), Archangel, who announced the birth of St John the Baptist to Zachary, and her Divine Motherhood to Our Lady: ST IRENÆUS, Bishop of Sirmium: ST SIMON, an infant, and ST WILLIAM, martyrs, said to have been killed by the Jews. These innocent victims of anti-Christian hatred were glorified by miracles after their deaths.

<sup>1</sup> Meaning the Boswethe, which runs through Sirmisch, and falls into the sea five leagues lower.

MARCH 25

## THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

THIS great festival takes its name from the happy tidings brought by the angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary, concerning the incarnation of the Son of God. When the Son of God became man, he could have taken upon him our nature without the co-operation of any creature; but was pleased to be born of a woman. In the choice of her whom he raised to this most sublime of all dignities to which any pure creature could be exalted, he pitched upon her who, by the riches of his grace and virtues, was of all others the most holy and the most perfect. The design of this embassy of the archangel is as extraordinary as the persons concerned in it. It is to give a Saviour to the world, a victim of propitiation to the sinner, a model to the just, a son to this Virgin, remaining still a virgin, and a new nature to the Son of God, the nature of man, capable of suffering pain and anguish in order to the satisfaction of God's justice for our transgressions. And the Son of God being to take a human body formed of her substance, the Holy Ghost, who, by a power all-divine, was to her in place of a spouse, was not content to render her body capable of giving life to a Man-God, but likewise enriched her soul with a fulness of grace, that there might be a sort of proportion between the cause and the effect, and she the better qualified to co-operate towards this mystery of sanctity.

The angel begins his address to her with "Hail! full of grace."<sup>1</sup> This is not the first time that angels appeared to women: but we find not that they were ever treated with that respect which the angel Gabriel shows to Mary. Sarah and Agar were visited by these celestial spirits, but not with an honour like that wherewith the angel on this occasion addresses the Blessed Virgin, saying, "Hail! full of grace." He considers her as the greatest object among creatures of God's favour, affection, and complacency. He admires in her those wonderful effects of the divine liberality, those magnificent gifts and graces, those exalted virtues, which have placed the very foundation of her spiritual edifice on the holy mountains,<sup>2</sup> in a degree of perfection surpassing that of all pure creatures. He admires that perfect gratitude with which she always received God's grace, and her perfect fidelity in corresponding with it, and advancing in sanctity, by the help thereof, with a solicitude answerable to her love and gratitude, for the preservation and increase of so inestimable a treasure. "Full of grace." The first encomium which St John gives us of the glory of the "Word made flesh" is, that he was "full of grace and truth."<sup>3</sup> God forbid that we should say that Mary was full of grace

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 28.<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxxvi.<sup>3</sup> John i. 14.

in the same manner as her Son; for he is the very source and origin of it, "from whose fulness all" the saints, Mary not excepted, "have received"<sup>1</sup> whatever degree they possess of grace and sanctity. St Luke assures us also that St Stephen was full of grace and the Holy Ghost,<sup>2</sup> but it was a fullness in regard to a less capacity, and in relation to a lower function. Moreover, to St Stephen and other saints, who have received large portions of heavenly grace, we may say, in those other words of the angel, "You have found favour with God": but those very favours, though very great in themselves, were not to be compared with that which from all eternity was reserved for Mary. God made the saints the object of his gratuitous election, and he qualified them with his graces to be the messengers of his Son, the preachers and witnesses of his gospel; but Mary was his choice, and was furnished with his graces to bear the most illustrious, the most exalted title of honour that heaven could bestow on a pure creature, to conceive of her proper substance the divine Word made man. If then the grace of God so raises a person in worth and merit that there is not any prince on earth who deserves to be compared with a soul that is dignified with the lowest degree of sanctifying grace; what shall we say or think of Mary, in whom the fullness of grace was only a preparation to her maternity?

But who can be surprised at those inestimable treasures which God, on this occasion, with so liberal a hand, bestows on Mary, if he considers the purport of the following words of the angel: "The Lord is with thee." He is with her in a manner more intimate, more perfect, and more divine than he ever was or will be with any other creature. He is with her, not only by his essence, by his presence, by his power; for he is thus with all his creatures: He is with her, not only by his actual grace touching her heart and enlightening her understanding; he is thus many times with the sinner: He is with her, not only with his sanctifying grace, making her agreeable in his sight, and placing her in the number of his children; he is present in this manner with all the just: He is with her, not only by a special protection guiding her in his ways, and leading her securely to the term of salvation; this he does for the elect: but he is also with her by a substantial and corporeal presence, residing personally and really in her. In her, and of her substance, is this day formed his adorable body; in her he reposes for nine months, with his whole divinity and humanity. It is in this ineffable manner that he is with Mary, and with none but Mary.

The angel concludes his address with these words: "Blessed art thou among women."<sup>3</sup> "Blessed," as being chosen preferably to all of her sex, to be the glorious instrument, in the hand of God, for removing the maledictions laid on mankind in punishment of their sins, and in com-

<sup>1</sup> John i. 16.<sup>2</sup> Acts iv. 8.<sup>3</sup> Luke i. 28.

municating to them the source of all good. And on this account it was that "all" succeeding "generations," as she foretold of herself, "should call her Blessed";<sup>1</sup> regarding her as the centre in which all the blessings of the Old and New Testament are drawn together.

Though we are obliged to consider the eminent quality of Mother of God as the source of all other graces bestowed on the Blessed Virgin, it must yet be owned it is not the greatest, and that she was happier in loving Jesus Christ than in having conceived him and brought him forth. She is "blessed among women" and above the rest of creatures, not precisely on account of her maternity, but because she received a fulness of grace proportioned to the dignity to which she was chosen. So that, according to the remark of the holy fathers, she was happier for her sanctity than for her dignity: for her virtues than for her privileges. Among her virtues, that of purity seems particularly deserving of notice on this solemnity, as the epistle for this festival records that memorable prophecy of Isaias, "That a virgin should conceive and bring forth a son";<sup>2</sup> the most remarkable of the signs God had promised the world for making known the accomplishment of the mystery of man's redemption. And indeed right reason seemed to require that she, who was to be the mother of God, should be of an integrity above reproach, and incapable of yielding to any solicitation: it was highly fit her virginity should be perfectly pure, and removed as far as possible from the least suspicion of blemish. For this reason, the moment God had chosen her to be his mother, he exacted from her the most authentic proofs of an inviolable attachment to purity. Thus, it is not in a crowd, or in idle conversation, but in a retreat, that the angel finds her. It is not from the distraction of diversions and entertainments that he calls her aside to deliver his message: no; she is alone in her house, with the door shut; "and," as St Ambrose says, "he must be an angel that gets entrance there."<sup>3</sup> Hence, according to the same holy father, it was not the angel's appearance that gave her trouble, for he will not have it to be doubted but heavenly visions and a commerce with the blessed spirits had been familiar to her. But what alarmed her, he says, was the angel's appearing in human form, in the shape of a young man. What might add to her fright on the occasion was his addressing her in the strain of praise, which kind of words flattery often puts in the mouths of ill-designing men. And how few, alas, are able to withstand such dangers! But Mary, guarded by her modesty, is in confusion at expressions of this sort, and dreads the least appearance of deluding flattery. Such high commendations make her cautious how she answers, till in silence she has more fully considered of the matter: "She revolved in her mind," says St Luke, "what manner

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 48.<sup>2</sup> Isai. vii. 14.<sup>3</sup> "O hospitium solis angelis pervium!"—St Amb. in Luc.

of salutation this should be."<sup>1</sup> Ah, what numbers of innocent souls have been corrupted for want of using the like precautions!

A second cause why Mary was disturbed at the words of the angel was because they contained her praises. Humble souls always tremble and sink with confusion in their own minds when they hear themselves commended; because they are deeply penetrated with a sense of their own weakness and insufficiency, and they consider contempt as their due. The high eulogiums bestowed on Mary by the angel she answers no otherwise than by a profound silence, by a saintly trouble of mind, which, with a modest blush, appears in her countenance. The angel, to calm her disquiets, says to her, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour before God." He then informs her that she is to conceive and bring forth a son whose name shall be Jesus, who shall be great, and the son of the Most High, and possessed of the throne of David, her illustrious ancestor. Mary, who according to St Austin<sup>2</sup> had consecrated her virginity to God by a vow, is not at all weakened by the prospect of such a dignity in her resolution of living a virgin; but, on the contrary, out of a just concern to know how she may comply with the will of God without prejudice to her vow, neither moved by curiosity, nor doubting of the miracle or its possibility, she inquires, "How shall this be?" Nor does she give her consent till the heavenly messenger acquaints her that it is to be a work of the Holy Ghost, who, in making her fruitful, will not entrench in the least upon her virginal purity, but cause her to be a mother, still remaining, as she desires, a pure virgin.

Mary is still the same, or rather much more lowly and meek in spirit upon the accession of this unparalleled dignity. She sees no cause to pride herself in her virtues, graces, and privileges, knowing that the glory of all these are due only to the divine Author and Bestower of them. In submission, therefore, to God's will, without any further inquiries, she expresses her assent in these humble but powerful words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." What faith and confidence does her answer express! What profound humility and perfect obedience! She was saluted Mother of God, yet uses no word of dignity, but styles herself nothing more than his handmaid, to be commanded and employed by him as he shall think fittest. The world, as heaven had decreed, was not to have a Saviour till she had given her consent to the angel's proposal; she gives it, and behold the power and efficacy of her submissive fiat! That moment, the mystery of love and mercy promised to mankind four thousand years before, foretold by so many prophets, desired by so many saints, is wrought on earth. That moment, the Word of God is for ever united to humanity;

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Quod profecto non diceret nisi se virginem ante vovisset. L. de Virg. c. 4. t. vi. p. 343.

the soul of Jesus Christ, produced from nothing, begins to enjoy God, and to know all things past, present, and to come: that moment, God begins to have an adorer who is infinite, and the world a mediator who is omnipotent; and, to the working of this great mystery, Mary alone is chosen to co-operate by her free assent. How far are the ways of God above those of men! how greatly does divine wisdom differ from human folly! how does every circumstance in this mystery confound the pride, the pomp, and the vain titles of worldly grandeur, and recommend to us the love of silence and sincere humility! Shall the disciples of Christ have other sentiments?

But what tongue can express the inward feelings and affections which then filled the glowing heart of the most pure Mother of God? What light shone in her understanding to penetrate the mysteries and the excess of the unfathomed goodness of God! what ardours of holy love inflamed her will! what jubilee filled her soul! Let men redeemed exult and praise, returning to God their best homages of adoration, thanksgiving, and love. It is for this duty that the church has appointed this present festival, which we ought chiefly to consecrate to the contemplation of this adorable mystery with hymns of love, praise, and thanksgiving. It was the hope and comfort of all the ancient saints, and the great object of all their earnest prayers, tears, and sighs. The prophets had a view to it in all their predictions, this being the principal point in all the wonderful revelations of God made to his church since the fall of Adam in Paradise, whom he immediately comforted with a promise and glimpse of this glorious mercy. Every ordinance in the law which he gave the Jews was typical, and had either an immediate or at least an indirect relation to Christ and our redemption by him. Among the numberless religious rites and sacrifices which were prescribed them, there was not one which did not in some manner represent or allude to this mystery. How high an idea ought this circumstance to give us of its incomprehensible greatness, which its nature and wonderful effects and fruits must enhance beyond the power of words! We are lost in astonishment when we contemplate this prodigy of omnipotence and infinite wisdom and mercy, and adore it in raptures and silence.

Gerson cries out on this mystery: "What ought every heart to say or think! every religious, every loving and faithful heart? It ought to rejoice exceedingly in this singular comfort, and to salute you with Gabriel, 'O blessed among women.'" St Peter Chrysologus expresses the truth of this mystery as follows: "One virgin so receives and contains God in the lodging of her breast as to procure peace for the earth, glory for heaven, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, an alliance of those on earth with the blessed in heaven, and the commerce of God with the flesh,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Serm. 146.

St Austin says that, according to an ancient tradition, this mystery was completed on the 25th of March.<sup>1</sup> Both eastern and western churches celebrate it on this day, and have done so at least ever since the fifth century. This festival is mentioned by Pope Gelasius I, in 492. The council of Constantinople, in 692, orders the *Missa præsanctificationum*, as on Good Friday, to be said on all days in Lent, except Saturdays, Sundays, and the feast of the Annunciation.<sup>2</sup> The tenth council of Toledo, in 656, calls this solemnity "the festival of the Mother of God," by way of excellence. To praise the divine goodness for this incomprehensible mystery of the incarnation, Urban II, in the council of Clermont, in 1095, ordered the bell to be rung every day for the triple Angelical Salutation, called *Angelus Domini*, at morning, noon, and night; which practice of devotion several popes have recommended by indulgences, as John XXII, Calixtus III, Paul III, Alexander VII and Clement X. The late Benedict XIII has augmented them to those who, at the aforesaid hours, shall devoutly recite this prayer kneeling.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 25 :*

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY : ST CAMMIN, Abbot, who retired from the world in his youth, to Lough Derg, where he built a monastery : BLESSED JAMES BIRD, English martyr, 1593 : BLESSED MARGARET CLITHEROW, daughter of Thomas Middleton, Sheriff of York, another English martyr, slowly pressed to death (the penalty of "felony") for harbouring priests, 1586.

### MARCH 26

## ST LUDGER, BISHOP OF MUNSTER, APOSTLE OF SAXONY

(A.D. 809)

[From his life, written by Altfrid, one of his successors, and another compiled by a monk of Werden, about sixty years after the death of St Ludger, of inferior authority to the former, both extant in Mabillon, Act. Bened. t. iv. p. 289; also a third life in Surius and the Bollandists, wrote by the monks of Werden, perhaps twenty years after the latter. See Hist. Liter. Fr. t. v. p. 660.]

ST LUDGER was born in Friseland about the year 743. His father, who was a nobleman of the first rank in that country, at the child's own request, committed him very young to the care of St Gregory, the disciple of St Boniface, and his successor in the government of the see of Utrecht. Ludger had the happiness to have seen that holy martyr, and received from him strong impressions of virtue. Gregory educated him in his monastery, and, admiring his progress in learning and piety, gave him the clerical tonsure. Ludger, desirous of further improvement, passed over into England, and spent four years and a half under Alcuin, who was rector of a famous school at York. He was careful to employ his whole time in the exercises of piety and the study of the holy scriptures and fathers. In 773 he returned home, and St Gregory dying in 776,

<sup>1</sup> L. iv. de Trin. c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See Thomasin des Fêtes, p. 229.



his successor, Alberic, compelled our saint to receive the holy order of priesthood, and employed him for several years in preaching the word of God in Friseland, where he converted great numbers, both among the pagans and vicious Christians, founded several monasteries, and built many churches. This was the state of affairs when the pagan Saxons, ravaging the country, obliged him to leave Friseland, whereupon he travelled to Rome to consult Pope Adrian II what course to take, and what he thought God required of him. He then retired for three years and a half to Mount Cassino, where he wore the habit of the order, and conformed to the practice of the rule during his stay, but made no religious vows. In 787, Charlemagne overcame the Saxons and conquered Friseland and the coast of the Germanic ocean as far as Denmark. Ludger, hearing that by this revolution the mission was again opened, returned into East Friseland, where he converted the Saxons to the faith; as he also did the province of Sudergou, now called Westphalia. He founded the monastery of Werden,<sup>1</sup> in the county of La Mark, twenty-nine miles from Cologne. His old master, Alcuin, being come into France, made his merit known to the Emperor Charlemagne. In 802, Hildebald, Archbishop of Cologne, not regarding his strenuous resistance, ordained him Bishop of Mimigardeford (or ford of the river Mimigard), a city which afterwards changed this name for that of Munster, from the great monastery of regular canons which St Ludger built there, to serve for his cathedral. He joined to his diocese five cantons of Friseland which he had converted, and also founded the monastery of Helmstad, afterwards called Ludger-Clooster, or Ludger's Cloister, in the duchy of Brunswick.

He was very learned in the holy scriptures, and read daily lectures thereon to his disciples. He fasted and watched much, and always wore a hair-shirt, but secretly, so that no one knew of it till a little before his death. He ate some flesh, at certain times, chiefly to conform to others, but always observing a strict temperance. When invited to any entertainment, his discourse the whole time was on religious subjects, and he withdrew immediately after. To the poor he was affable and courteous, but firm and resolute to the proud rich. He exerted an episcopal vigour against impenitent sinners, and refused all manner of presents from an incestuous lady, and at length excommunicated her. Except what was absolutely necessary for his subsistence, he employed the revenues of his own estate, and those of his bishopric, in charities. He was accused to the Emperor Charlemagne, among other things, of wasting his income, and neglecting the embellishment of churches within his jurisdiction; and this prince, who loved to see churches magnificent, giving ear to the information, ordered him to appear at court. The morning after his

<sup>1</sup> Some have, by mistake, confounded this place with Ferden, or Werden, beyond the Weser.

arrival, the emperor's chamberlain brought him word that his attendance was required. The saint, being then at his prayers, told the officer that he would follow him as soon as he had finished them. He was sent for three several times before he was ready, which the courtiers represented as a contempt of his majesty; and the emperor, with some emotion, asked him why he had made him wait so long, though he had sent for him so often. The bishop answered, that though he had the most profound respect for his majesty, yet God was infinitely above him; that whilst we are occupied with him, it is our duty to forget everything else; and that in this he judged he had rather obeyed than neglected his majesty's orders, who, when he was chosen bishop, had recommended to him ever to prefer the service of God to that of men. This answer made such an impression on the emperor in favour of the saint that he looked upon it as a complete justification of his conduct as to every particular that had been laid to his charge; he accordingly dismissed him with honour, and disgraced his accusers. The saint took this liberty with a religious prince that he might condemn the sloth of many who suffer distractions or earthly trifles to interrupt their commerce with God; but they who leave prayer for necessary works of charity or obedience find God still in the exercises of those virtues. St Ludger required so devout an attention at divine service that, being at prayers one night with his clergy, and one of them stooping down to mend the fire and hinder it from smoking, the saint after prayer severely rebuked him for it, and inflicted on him a penance for some days. St Ludger was favoured with the gift of miracles and prophecy. He foretold the invasions of the Normans from Denmark and Norway, and what ravages they would make in the French empire, and this at a time when there was not the least apprehension of any such thing. His great zeal inclined him to go and preach the faith to these northern nations, but the king would not allow of it. His last sickness, though violent, did not hinder him from continuing his functions to the very last day of his life, which was Passion Sunday, on which day he preached very early in the morning, said mass towards nine, and preached again before night, foretelling withal to those that were about him that he would die the following night, and fixing upon a place, in his monastery of Werden, where he chose to be interred. He died, accordingly, on the 26th of March, at midnight. His relics are still kept at Werden. Joseph, an Englishman, a disciple of Alcuin, whom he attended into France, wrote, in sixteen verses, an eulogium of St Ludger, published by Vossius<sup>1</sup> and Mabillon, as a specimen of good poetry for that age.

Nothing so much scandalizes the very infidels, or shows the decay of piety and loss of all sense of religion among Christians, as their

<sup>1</sup> Voss. de histor. lat. lib. ii. c. 3.

disrespectful behaviour in the house of God, and at the time of prayer. An awful strict silence, the most profound exterior respect, and penetrating inward devotion of heart must essentially accompany our homages when we present them before the throne of God, in whose presence the highest seraphims annihilate themselves. This silence we must observe, not only with our tongues, but also with our bodies and all our limbs, both out of respect to the presence of God and his altar, and also not to give the least occasion of distraction to others. Prayer is an action so sublime and supernatural that the church, in her canonical hours, teaches us to begin it by a fervent petition of grace to perform it well. What an insolence and mockery is it to join with this petition an open disrespect and a neglect of all necessary precautions against distractions! We ought never to appear before God, to tender him our homages or supplications, without trembling, and without being deaf to all creatures, and shutting all our senses to every object that can distract our minds from God. In the life of F. Simon Gourdan, a regular canon of St Victor's at Paris, who died in the odour of sanctity in the year 1729, the eighty-fifth of his age, it is related that King Lewis XIV came to see him, and to commend himself to his prayers. The servant of God made him wait till he had finished his thanksgiving after mass, which edified that great prince, who said, "He does well; for he is employed in attending on a much greater king."

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 26 :*

ST BERNADINE of Fossa, 1420-1503 : ST BRAULIO, Bishop of Saragossa, who assisted St Isadore of Seville in settling the discipline of the Church of Spain : THE GOOD THIEF, known as ST DISMAS. His feast was first granted to be celebrated in England in the Diocese of Salford, in 1884 : and ST LUDGER, the Apostle of Saxony.

MARCH 27

ST JOHN OF EGYPT, HERMIT

(A.D. 394)

[From Rufinus, in the second book of the lives of the fathers ; and from Palladius in his *Lausiaca* : this last had often seen him. Also St Jerom, St Austin, Cassian, &c. See Tillemont, t. x. p. 9. See also the *Wonders of God in the Wilderness*, p. 160.]

ST JOHN was born about the year 305, was of a mean extraction, and brought up to the trade of a carpenter. At twenty-five years of age he forsook the world and put himself under the guidance and direction of an ancient holy anchoret with such an extraordinary humility and simplicity as struck the venerable old man with admiration; who inured him to obedience by making him water a dry stick for a whole year, as if it were a live plant, and perform several other things as seemingly ridiculous, all which he executed with the utmost fidelity. To the saint's humility and ready obedience, Cassian<sup>1</sup> attributes the extraordinary gifts he afterwards

<sup>1</sup> Coll. b. iv. c. 21, p. 81.

received from God. He seems to have lived about twelve years with this old man, till his death, and about four more in different neighbouring monasteries.

Being about forty years of age, he retired alone to the top of a rock of very difficult ascent near Lycopolis.<sup>1</sup> His cell he walled up, leaving only a little window through which he received all necessities and spoke to those who visited him what might be for their spiritual comfort and edification. During five days in the week he conversed only with God; but on Saturdays and Sundays all but women had free access to him for his instructions and spiritual advice. He never ate till after sunset, and then very sparingly; but never anything that had been dressed by fire—not so much as bread. In this manner did he live from the fortieth or forty-second to the ninetieth year of his age. For the reception of such as came to him from remote parts, he permitted a kind of hospital to be built near his cell, or grotto, where some of his disciples took care of them. He was illustrious for miracles, and a wonderful spirit of prophecy, with the power of discovering to those that came to see him their most secret thoughts and hidden sins. And such was the fame of his predictions, and the lustre of his miracles which he wrought on the sick, by sending them some oil which he had blessed, that they drew the admiration of the whole world upon him.

Theodosius the Elder was then emperor, and was attacked by the tyrant Maximus, become formidable by the success of his arms, having slain the Emperor Gratian in 383, and dethroned Valentinian in 387. The pious emperor, finding his army much inferior to that of his adversary, caused this servant of God to be consulted concerning the success of the war against Maximus. Our saint foretold him that he should be victorious almost without blood. The emperor, full of confidence in the prediction, marched into the West, defeated the more numerous armies of Maximus twice in Pannonia; crossed the Alps, took the tyrant in Aquileia, and suffered his soldiers to cut off his head. He returned triumphant to Constantinople, and attributed his victories very much to the prayers of St John, who also foretold him the events of his other wars, the incursions of barbarians, and all that was to befall his empire. Four years after, in 392, Eugenius, by the assistance of Arbogastes, who had murdered the Emperor Valentinian the Younger, usurped the empire of the West. Theodosius sent Eutropius the Eunuch into Egypt, with instructions to bring St John with him to Constantinople, if it was possible; but that if he could not prevail with him to undertake the journey, to consult whether it was God's will that he should march against Eugenius, or wait his arrival in the East. The man of God excused himself as to his journey to court, but assured Eutropius that his prince should be victorious, but

<sup>1</sup> A city in the north of Thebais, in Egypt.

not without loss and blood; as also that he would die in Italy, and leave the empire of the West to his son; all which happened accordingly. Theodosius marched against Eugenius, and in the first engagement lost ten thousand men, and was almost defeated; but renewing the battle on the next day, the 6th of September, in 394, he gained an entire victory, by the miraculous interposition of heaven, as even Claudian, the heathen poet, acknowledges. Theodosius died in the West, on the 17th of January, in 395, leaving his two sons emperors, Arcadius in the East, and Honorius in the West.

This saint restored sight to a senator's wife by some of the oil he had blessed for healing the sick. It being his inviolable custom never to admit any woman to speak to him, this gave occasion to a remarkable incident related by Evagrius, Palladius, and St Austin, in his treatise of Care for the Dead. A certain general officer in the emperor's service, visiting the saint, conjured him to permit his wife to speak to him; for she was come to Lycopolis, and had gone through many dangers and difficulties to enjoy that happiness. The holy man answered that during his stricter enclosure for the last forty years, since he had shut himself up in that rock, he had imposed on himself an inviolable rule not to see or converse with women; so he desired to be excused the granting her request. The officer returned to Lycopolis very melancholy. His wife, who was a person of great virtue, was not to be satisfied. The husband went back to the blessed man, told him that she would die of grief if he refused her request. The saint said to him, "Go to your wife, and tell her that she shall see me to-night, without coming hither or stirring out of her house." This answer he carried to her, and both were very earnest to know in what manner the saint would perform his promise. When she was asleep in the night, the man of God appeared to her in her dream, and said: "Your great faith, woman, obliged me to come to visit you; but I must admonish you to curb the like desires of seeing God's servants on earth. Contemplate only their life and imitate their actions. As for me, why did you desire to see me? Am I a saint or a prophet, like God's true servants? I am a sinful and weak man. It is, therefore, only in virtue of your faith that I have had recourse to our Lord, who grants you the cure of the corporeal diseases with which you are afflicted. Live always in the fear of God, and never forget his benefits." He added several proper instructions for her conduct, and disappeared. The woman, awaking, described to her husband the person she had seen in her dream, with all his features, in such a manner as to leave no room to doubt but it was the blessed man that had appeared to her. Whereupon he returned the next day to give him thanks for the satisfaction he had vouchsafed his wife. But the saint on his arrival prevented him, saying, "I have fulfilled your desire; I have seen your wife, and satisfied her in all things she had asked: go in peace."

The officer received his benediction, and continued his journey to Seyne. What the man of God foretold happened to him, as, among other things, that he should receive particular honours from the emperor. Besides the authors of the saint's life, St Austin relates this history, which he received from a nobleman of great integrity and credit, who had it from the very persons to whom it happened. St Austin adds, had he seen St John he would have inquired of him whether he himself really appeared to this woman, or whether it was an angel in his shape, or whether the vision only passed in her imagination.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 394, a little before the saint's death, he was visited by Palladius, afterwards Bishop of Helenopolis, who is one of the authors of his life. Several anchorets of the deserts of Nitria, all strangers, the principal of whom were Evagrius, Albinus, Ammonius, had a great desire to see the saint. Palladius, one of this number, being young, set out first in July, when the flood of the Nile was high. Being arrived at his mountain, he found the door of his porch shut, and that it would not be open till the Saturday following. He waited that time in the lodgings of strangers. On Saturday, at eight o'clock, Palladius entered the porch, and saw the saint sitting before his window, and giving advice to those who applied to him for it. Having saluted Palladius by an interpreter, he asked him of what country he was, and what was his business, and if he was not of the company or monastery of Evagrius: Palladius owned he was. In the meantime arrived Alypius, governor of the province, in great haste. The saint, on the arrival of Alypius, broke off his discourse with Palladius, who withdrew to make room for the governor to discourse with the saint. Their conversation was very long, and Palladius being weary, murmured within himself against the venerable old man, as guilty of exception of persons. He was even just going away, when the saint, knowing his secret thoughts, sent Theodorus, his interpreter, to him, saying, "Go, bid that brother not to be impatient: I am going to dismiss the governor, and then will speak to him." Palladius, astonished that his thoughts should be known to him, waited with patience. As soon as Alypius was gone, St John called Palladius and said to him, "Why was you angry, imputing to me in your mind what I was no way guilty of? To you I can speak at any other time, and you have many fathers and brethren to comfort and direct you in the paths of salvation. But this governor being involved in the hurry of temporal affairs, and being come to receive some wholesome advice during the short time his affairs will allow him time to breathe in, how could I give you the preference?" He then told Palladius what passed in his heart and his secret temptations to quit his solitude; for which end the devil represented to him his father's regret for his absence, and that he might induce his brother and sister to

<sup>1</sup> St Aug. i, pro curâ de mortuis, c. 17, p. 294.

embrace a solitary life. The holy man bade him despise such suggestions; for they had both already renounced the world, and his father would yet live seven years. He foretold him that he should meet with great persecutions and sufferings, and should be a bishop, but with many afflictions: all which came to pass, though at that time extremely improbable.

The same year, St Petronius, with six other monks, made a long journey to pay St John a visit. He asked them if any amongst them was in holy orders. They said, No. One, however, the youngest in the company, was a deacon, though this was unknown to the rest. The saint, by divine instinct, knew this circumstance, and that the deacon had concealed his orders out of a false humility, not to seem superior to the others, but their inferior, as he was in age. Therefore, pointing to him, he said, "This man is a deacon." The other denied it, upon the false persuasion that to lie with a view to one's own humiliation was no sin. St John took him by the hand, and kissing it, said to him, "My son, take care never to deny the grace you have received from God, lest humility betray you into a lie. We must never lie, under any pretence of good whatever, because no untruth can be from God." The deacon received this rebuke with great respect. After their prayer together, one of the company begged of the saint to be cured of a tertian ague. He answered, "You desire to be freed from a sickness which is beneficial to you. As nitre cleanses the body, so distempers and other chastisements purify the soul." However, he blessed some oil and gave it to him: he vomited plentifully after it, and was from that moment perfectly cured. They returned to their lodgings, where, by his orders, they were treated with all proper civility and cordial hospitality. When they went to him again, he received them with joyfulness in his countenance, which evidenced the interior spiritual joy of his soul; he bade them sit down, and asked them whence they came. They said from Jerusalem. He then made them a long discourse, in which he first endeavoured to show his own baseness; after which he explained the means by which pride and vanity are to be banished out of the heart, and all virtues to be acquired. He related to them the examples of many monks, who, by suffering their hearts to be secretly corrupted by vanity, at last fell also into scandalous irregularities; as of one who, after a most holy and austere life, by this means fell into fornication, and then by despair into all manner of disorders: also of another who, from vanity, fell into a desire of leaving his solitude; but by a sermon he preached to others, in a monastery on his road, was mercifully converted and became an eminent penitent. The blessed John thus entertained Petronius and his company for three days till the hour of None. When they were leaving him, he gave them his blessing, and said, "Go in peace, my children; and know that the news of the victory which the religious prince Theodosius has gained over the tyrant Eugenius

is this day come to Alexandria: but this excellent emperor will soon end his life by a natural death." Some days after their leaving him to return home, they were informed he had departed this life. Having been favoured by a foresight of his death, he would see nobody for the last three days. At the end of this term he sweetly expired, being on his knees at prayer, towards the close of the year 394 or the beginning of 395. It might probably be on the 17th of October, on which day the Cophes, or Egyptian Christians, keep his festival: the Roman and other Latin Martyrologies mark it on the 27th of March.

The solitude which the Holy Ghost recommends, and which the saints embraced, resembled that of Jesus Christ, being founded in the same motive or principle, and having the same exercises and employments, and the same end. Christ was conducted by the Holy Ghost into the desert, and he there spent his time in prayer and fasting. Woe to those whom humour or passion lead into solitude, or who consecrate it not to God by mortification, sighs of penance, and hymns of divine praise. To those who thus sanctify their desert or cell, it will be an anticipated paradise, an abyss of spiritual advantages and comforts, known only to such as have enjoyed them.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 27 :*

ST JOHN DAMASCENE, Doctor of the Church : ST JOHN OF EGYPT, hermit : ST RUPERT (or Robert ?), Bishop of Saltzbourg, a Frenchman of royal blood, illustrious for extraordinary virtues. He excelled in mortification from his youth, and suffered greatly for the faith while Bishop of Worms, his first see. He died happily on Easter Day.

## MARCH 28

### PRISCUS, MALCHUS, AND ALEXANDER, MARTYRS

(A.D. 260)

[From Eus. Hist. b. vii. c. 12, p. 262.]

THESE eminent Christians, Priscus, Malchus, and Alexander, led a retired holy life in the country near Cæsarea, in Palestine. During the fury of the persecution under Valerian, they often called to mind the triumphs of the martyrs, and secretly reproached themselves with cowardice, as living like soldiers who passed their time in softness and ease whilst their brethren and fellow-warriors bore all the heat of the battle. They could not long smother these warm sentiments in their breast; but expressed them to one another. "What," said they, "whilst the secure gate of heaven is open, shall we shut it against ourselves? Shall we be so faint-hearted as not to suffer for the name of Christ, who died for us? Our brethren invite us by their example; their blood is a loud voice, which presses us to tread in their steps. Shall we be deaf to a cry calling us to the combat,



and to a glorious victory?" Full of this holy ardour, they all with one mind repaired to Cæsarea, and of their own accord, by a particular instinct of grace, presented themselves before the governor, declaring themselves Christians. Whilst all others were struck with admiration at the sight of their generous courage, the barbarous judge appeared not able to contain his rage. After having tried on them all the tortures which he employed on other martyrs, he condemned them to be exposed to wild beasts. They are honoured on this day in the Roman Martyrology.

In consecrating ourselves to the service of God and to his pure love, the first and most essential condition is that we do it without reserve, with an earnest desire of attaining to the perfection of our state, and a firm resolution of sparing nothing, and being deterred by no difficulties, from pursuing this end with our whole strength; and it must be our chief care constantly to maintain and always increase this desire in our souls. Upon this condition depends all our spiritual progress. This is more essential in a religious state than the vows themselves. Mortification and prayer, which are the principal means, present usually the greatest difficulties; but these, as St Terasa observes, are better than half vanquished and removed by a firm resolution of not being discouraged by any obstacles, but of gathering from them fresh vigour and strength. Patience and fortitude crown in the saints what this fervent resolution began.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 28 :*

ST GONTRAN, king, a grandson of Clovis : BLESSED PETER LOUIS MARY CHANEL, 1803-1841, proto-martyr of Oceania, a zealous French missionary in the "Friendly Isles," so called by Captain Cook because, in his time, the natives had no weapons whatsoever : ST JOHN CAPISTRAN, Franciscan preacher, a promoter of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the fifteenth century : ST PRISCUS, ST MALCHUS, and ST ALEXANDER : and ST SIXTUS III, Pope, the first to publicly proclaim the Pelagian heretics anathema, after Pope Zosimus had condemned their teaching. He sat in the See of Rome for eight years and died on this date in 440.

### MARCH 29

## SAINTS JONAS, BARACHISIUS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

(A.D. 327)

[From their genuine acts compiled by Esaias, a noble Armenian knight in the troops of King Sapor, an eyewitness; published in the original Chaldaic by Stephen Assemani, Act. Mart. Orient. t. i. p. 211. They were much adulterated by the Greeks in Metaphrastes. Ruinart and Tillemont think Sapor raised no persecution before his fortieth year; but Assemani proves from these acts, and several other monuments, a persecution in his eighteenth year. See Præf. Gen. and p. 214, app.]

KING SAPOR, in the eighteenth year of his reign, raised a bloody persecution against the Christians, and demolished their churches and monasteries. Jonas and Barachisius, two brothers of the city Beth-Asa, hearing that several Christians lay under sentence of death at Hubaham,

went thither to encourage and serve them. Nine of that number received the crown of martyrdom. After their execution, Jonas and Barachisius were apprehended for having exhorted them to die. The president mildly entreated the two brothers to obey the king of kings, meaning the King of Persia, and to worship the sun, moon, fire, and water. Their answer was that it was more reasonable to obey the immortal King of heaven and earth than a mortal prince. The Magians were much offended to hear their king called mortal. By their advice the martyrs were separated, and Barachisius was cast into a very narrow close dungeon. Jonas they detained with them, endeavouring to persuade him to sacrifice to fire, the sun, and water. The prince of the Magians, seeing him inflexible, caused him to be laid flat on his belly, with a stake under his navel, and to be beaten with knotty clubs and with rods. The martyr all the time continued in prayer, saying, "I thank you, O God of our father Abraham. Enable me, I beseech you, to offer to you acceptable holocausts. 'One thing I have asked of the Lord: this will I seek after.'<sup>1</sup> The sun, moon, fire, and water I renounce. I believe and confess the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." The judge ordered him next to be set in a frozen pond, with a cord tied to his foot. After supper and a short nap, he sent for Barachisius, and told him his brother had sacrificed. The martyr said it was impossible that he should have paid divine honours to fire, a vile creature, and spoke much on the immensity and power of God, and with such eloquence and force that the Magians were astonished to hear him, and said one to another that if he were permitted to speak in public he would draw over many from their religion. Whereupon they concluded for the future to hold his interrogatories in the night. In the meantime they caused two red-hot iron plates and two red-hot hammers to be applied under each arm, and said to him, "If you shake off either of these, by the king's fortune, you deny Christ." He meekly replied, "I fear not your fire; nor shall I throw off your instruments of torture. I beg you to try without delay all your torments on me. He who is engaged in combat for God is full of courage. Jonas, after this, being brought out of his pool, the Magians said to him, "How do you find yourself this morning? We imagine you passed the last night but very uncomfortably." "No," replied Jonas; "from the day I came into the world, I never remember a night more sweet and agreeable; for I was wonderfully refreshed by the remembrance of Christ's sufferings." The Magians said, "Your companion hath renounced." The martyr, interrupting them, answered, "I know that he has long renounced the devil and his angels." The Magians urged, "Take care lest you perish, abandoned both by God and man." Jonas replied, "If you are really wise, as you boast, judge if it be not better to sow the corn than to keep

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xvi. 4.

it hoarded up. Our life is a seed sown to rise again in the world to come, when it will be renewed by Christ in immortal light." The Magians said, "Your books have drawn many aside." Jonas answered, "They have indeed drawn many from worldly pleasures. When a servant of Christ is in his sufferings inebriated with love from the passion of his Lord, he forgets the transitory state of this short life, its riches, estates, gold, and honours; regardless of kings and princes, lords and noblemen, where an eternity is at stake, he desires nothing but the sight of the only true King, whose empire is everlasting, and whose power reaches to all ages." The judges commanded all his fingers and toes to be cut off, joint by joint, and scattered about. Then they said to him, "Now wait the harvest to reap other hands from this seed." To whom he said, "Other hands I do not ask: God is present, who first framed me, and who will give me new strength." After this, the skin was torn off the martyr's head, his tongue was cut out, and he was thrown into a vessel of boiling pitch; but the pitch by a sudden ebullition running over, the servant of God was not hurt by it. Lastly, his body was sawn with an iron saw, and, by pieces, thrown into a dry cistern. Guards were appointed to watch the sacred relics, lest Christians should steal them away. The judges then called upon Barachisius to spare his own body: to whom he said, "This body I did not frame, neither will I destroy it. God, its maker, will again restore it; and will judge you and your king." Hormisdatscirus, turning to Maharnarsces, said, "By our delays we affront the king. These men regard neither words nor torments. They therefore agreed that he should be beaten with sharp-pointed rushes. After these tortures, he was put into the screw or press, and boiling pitch and brimstone were poured into his mouth. By this last torment he obtained a crown equal to that of his brother. The acts are closed by these words: "This book was written from the mouths of witnesses, and contains the acts of the saints, Jonas, Barachisius, and others, martyrs of Christ, who by his succour fought, triumphed, and were crowned, in whose prayers we beg place may be found, by Esaias, son of Adabus of Arzun, in Armenia, of the troop of royal horsemen, who was present at their interrogatories and tortures, and who wrote the history of their conflicts." They were crowned on the 29th of the moon of December. This was the 24th of that month, in the year of Christ 327, of Sapor II the 18th. The Roman Martyrology mentions them on the 29th of March.

Those powerful motives, which supported the martyrs under the sharpest torments, ought to inspire us with patience, resignation, and holy joy under sickness and all crosses or trials. These are the times of the greatest spiritual harvest, by the exercise of the most perfect virtues. For nothing is more heroic in the practice of Christian virtue

nothing more precious in the sight of God, than the sacrifice of patience, submission, constant fidelity and charity in a state of suffering. Under sickness we are too apt eagerly to desire health, that we may be able to do something for God, and to discharge the obligations of our profession, as we persuade ourselves. This is a mere invention of self-love, which is impatient under the weight of humiliation. We should only ask for health in sickness under this condition, if it be more expedient for God's honour and our spiritual advancement. With St Paul, we should find a joy and delight in a state of privation and suffering, in which we enter into a true sense of our absolute weakness, feel that we are nothing, and have no reliance but on God alone.

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 29 :*

ST ARMOGASTES, ST ARCHINIMUS, and ST SATURAS, martyrs under Genseric. Of Saturas we read that his wife tried to induce him to yield, but he answered : " If you loved me, you would give me different advice." ST EUSTASIUS, Abbot of Luxeu, succeeded his master St Columban in that charge in 611 : ST GUNDLEUS, formerly greatly honoured in Wales, son of a king and father of two saints. " He lived so as to have always in view that heavenly kingdom for which we are created." SAINTS JONAS, BARACHISIUS, and others : and ST MARK, Bishop of Arethusa, in Syria, honoured by the Greeks on this day.

MARCH 30

ST JOHN CLIMACUS, ABBOT

(A.D. 605)

[From his life, written by Daniel, a monk of Raithu, soon after his death, and from his own works. See Bulteau, *Hist. Monast. d'Orient, and d'Andilly*, or rather his nephew, *Le Maitre*, in his life prefixed to the French translation of his works. See also Jos. Assemani, in *Cal. Univ. ad 30 Martii*, t. vi. p. 213.]

ST JOHN, generally distinguished by the appellation of Climacus, from his excellent book entitled *Climax*, or the Ladder to Perfection, was born about the year 525, probably in Palestine. By his extraordinary progress in the arts and sciences he obtained very young the surname of the Scholastic. But at sixteen years of age he renounced all the advantages which the world promised him to dedicate himself to God in a religious state, in 547. He retired to Mount Sinai, which, from the time of the disciples of St Anthony and St Hilarion, had been always peopled by holy men, who, in imitation of Moses, when he received the law on that mountain, lived in the perpetual contemplation of heavenly things. Our novice, fearing the danger of dissipation and relaxation to which numerous communities are generally more exposed than others, chose not to live in the great monastery on the summit, but in an hermitage on the descent of the mountain, under the discipline of Martyrius, an holy ancient anchoret. By silence he curbed the insolent itch of talking about everything; an ordinary vice in learned men, but usually a mark of pride and self-sufficiency. By perfect humility and obedience he banished the

dangerous desire of self-complacency in his actions. He never contradicted, never disputed with anyone. So perfect was his submission that he seemed to have no self-will. Four years he spent in the trial of his own strength, and in learning the obligations of his state, before he made his religious profession, which was in the twentieth year of his age. In his writings he severely condemns engagements made by persons too young, or before a sufficient probation. By fervent prayer and fasting he prepared himself for the solemn consecration of himself to God, that the most intense fervour might make his holocaust the more perfect; and from that moment he seemed to be renewed in spirit; and his master admired the strides with which, like a mighty giant, the young disciple advanced daily more and more towards God, by self-denial, obedience, humility, and the uninterrupted exercises of divine love and prayer.

In the year 560, and the thirty-fifth of his age, he lost Martyrius by death; having then spent nineteen years in that place in penance and holy contemplation. By the advice of a prudent director, he then embraced an eremitical life in a plain called Thole, near the foot of Mount Sinai. His cell was five miles from the church, probably the same which had been built a little before, by order of the Emperor Justinian, for the use of the monks at the bottom of this mountain, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, as Procopius mentions.<sup>1</sup> Thither he went every Saturday and Sunday to assist, with all the other anchorets and monks of that desert, at the holy office and at the celebration of the divine mysteries, when they all communicated. His diet was very sparing, though, to shun ostentation and the danger of vainglory, he ate of everything that was allowed among the monks of Egypt, who universally abstained from flesh, fish, &c. Prayer was his principal employment; and he practised what he earnestly recommends to all Christians, that in all their actions, thoughts, and words they should keep themselves with great fervour in the presence of God, and direct all they do to his holy will.<sup>2</sup> By habitual contemplation he acquired an extraordinary purity of heart, and such a facility of lovingly beholding God in all his works that this practice seemed in him a second nature. Thus he accompanied his studies with perpetual prayer. He assiduously read the holy scriptures and fathers, and was one of the most learned doctors of the church. But, to preserve the treasure of humility, he concealed, as much as possible, both his natural and acquired talents, and the extraordinary graces with which the Holy Ghost enriched his soul. By this secrecy he fled from the danger of vainglory, which, like a leech, sticks to our best actions and, sucking from them its nourishment, robs us of their fruit. As if this cell had not been sufficiently remote from the eyes of men, St John frequently retired into a neighbouring cavern which he had made in the rock, where no one could come to dis-

<sup>1</sup> Procop. lib. v. de ædific. Justin.

<sup>2</sup> St Jo. Clim. gr. 27, n. 67.

turb his devotions or interrupt his tears. Overcome by importunities, he admitted a holy anchoret named Moyses to live with him as his disciple.

God bestowed on St John an extraordinary grace of healing the spiritual disorders of souls. Among others, a monk called Isaac was brought almost to the brink of despair by most violent temptations of the flesh. He addressed himself to St John, who perceived by his tears how much he underwent from that conflict and struggle which he felt within himself. The servant of God commended his faith, and said, "My son, let us have recourse to God by prayer." They accordingly prostrated themselves together on the ground in fervent supplication for a deliverance, and from that time the infernal serpent left Isaac in peace. Many others resorted to St John for spiritual advice; but the devil excited some to jealousy, who censured him as one who, out of vanity, lost much time in unprofitable discourse. The saint took this accusation, which was a mere calumny, in good part, and as a charitable admonition; he therefore imposed on himself a rigorous silence for near a twelvemonth. This, his humility and modesty, so much astonished his calumniators that they joined the rest of the monks in beseeching him to reassume his former function of giving charitable advice to all that resorted to him for it, and not to bury that talent of science which he had received for the benefit of many. He who knew not what it was to contradict others, with the same humility and deference again opened his mouth to instruct his neighbour in the rules of perfect virtue, in which office, such was the reputation of his wisdom and experience, that he was regarded as another Moses in that holy place.

St John was now seventy-five years old, and had spent forty of them in his hermitage, when, in the year 600, he was unanimously chosen Abbot of Mount Sinai, and superior-general of all the monks and hermits in that country. Soon after he was raised to this dignity, the people of Palestine and Arabia, in the time of a great drought and famine, made their application to him as to another Elias, begging him to intercede with God in their behalf. The saint failed not, with great earnestness, to recommend their distress to the Father of mercies, and his prayer was immediately recompensed with abundant rains. St Gregory the Great, who then sat in St Peter's chair, wrote to our holy abbot,<sup>1</sup> recommending himself to his prayers, and sent him beds, with other furniture and money, for his hospital, for the use of pilgrims near Mount Sinai. John, who had used his utmost endeavours to decline the pastoral charge when he saw it laid upon him, neglected no means which might promote the sanctification of all those who were entrusted to his care. That posterity might receive some share in the benefit of his holy instructions, John, the learned and virtuous Abbot of Raithu, a monastery situate towards

<sup>1</sup> St Greg. lib. xi. Ep. 1; lib. xii. Ep. 16, t. ii. p. 1091.

the Red Sea, entreated him by that obedience he had ever practised, even with regard to his inferiors, that he would draw up the most necessary rules by which fervent souls might arrive at Christian perfection. The saint answered him that nothing but extreme humility could have moved him to write to so miserable a sinner, destitute of every sort of virtue; but that he received his commands with respect, though far above his strength, never considering his own insufficiency. Wherefore, apprehensive of falling into death by disobedience, he took up his pen in haste, with great eagerness mixed with fear, and set himself to draw some imperfect outlines, as an unskilful painter, leaving them to receive from him, as a great master, the finishing strokes. This produced the excellent work which he called "Climax; or, the Ladder of religious Perfection." This book, being written in sentences, almost in the manner of aphorisms, abounds more in sense than words. A certain majestic simplicity—an inexpressible unction and spirit of humility, joined with conciseness and perspicuity—very much enhance the value of this performance; but its chief merit consists in the sublime sentiments and perfect description of all Christian virtues which it contains. The author confirms his precepts by several edifying examples, as of obedience and penance.<sup>1</sup> In describing a monastery of three hundred and thirty monks which he had visited near Alexandria, in Egypt, he mentions one of the principal citizens of that city, named Isidore, who, petitioning to be admitted into the house, said to the abbot, "As iron is in the hands of the smith, so am I in your hands." The abbot ordered him to remain without the gate, and to prostrate himself at the feet of everyone that passed by, begging their prayers for his soul struck with a leprosy. Thus he passed seven years in profound humility and patience. He told St John that, during the first year, he always considered himself as a slave condemned for his sins, and sustained violent conflicts; the second year he passed in tranquillity and confidence; and the third with relish and pleasure in his humiliations. So great was his virtue that the abbot determined to present him to the bishop in order to be promoted to the priesthood, but the humility of the holy penitent prevented the execution of that design; for, having begged at least a respite, he died within ten days. St John could not help admiring the cook of this numerous community, who seemed always recollected, and generally bathed in tears amidst his continual occupation, and asked him by what means he nourished so perfect a spirit of compunction, in the midst of such a dissipating laborious employment. He said that serving the monks, he represented to himself that he was serving not men, but God in his servants; and that the fire he always had before his eyes reminded him of that fire which will burn souls for all eternity. The moving description which our author gives

<sup>1</sup> Gr. 4 and 5.

of the monastery of penitents called the Prison, above a mile from the former, hath been already abridged in our language. John the Sabaite told our saint, as of a third person, that seeing himself respected in his monastery, he considered that this was not the way to satisfy for his sins; wherefore, with the leave of his abbot, he repaired to a severe monastery in Pontus, and after three years saw in a dream a schedule of his debts, to the amount in appearance of one hundred pounds of gold, of which only ten were cancelled. He therefore repeated often to himself, "Poor Antiochus, thou hast still a great debt to satisfy." After passing other thirteen years in contempt and the most fervent practices of penance, he deserved to see in a vision his whole debt blotted out. Another monk, in a grievous fit of illness, fell into a trance, in which he lay as if he had been dead for the space of an hour; but, recovering, he shut himself up in a cell, and lived a recluse twelve years, almost continually weeping, in the perpetual meditation of death. When he was near death, his brethren could only extort from him these words of edification, "He who hath death always before his eyes will never sin." John, Abbot of Raithu, explained this book of our saint by judicious comments, which are also extant. We have likewise a letter of St John Climacus to the same person concerning the duties of a pastor, in which he exhorts him in correcting others to temper severity with mildness, and encourages him zealously to fulfil the obligations of his charge; for nothing is greater or more acceptable to God than to offer him the sacrifice of rational souls sanctified by penance and charity.

St John sighed continually under the weight of his dignity during the four years that he governed the monks of Mount Sinai; and as he had taken upon him that burden with fear and reluctance, he with joy found means to resign the same a little before his death. In his excellent maxims concerning the gift of holy tears, the fruit of charity,<sup>1</sup> we seem to behold a lively portraiture of his most pure soul. He died in his hermitage on the 30th day of March, in 605, being fourscore years old. His spiritual son, George, who had succeeded him in the abbacy, earnestly begged of God that he might not be separated from his dear master and guide; and followed him by a happy death within a few days. On several Greek commentaries on St John Climacus's ladder, see Montfaucon, *Biblioth. Coisliana*, pp. 305, 306.

St John Climacus, speaking of the excellence and the effects of charity, does it with a feeling and energy worthy of such a subject: "A mother," says he,<sup>2</sup> "feels less pleasure when she folds within her arms the dear infant whom she nourishes with her own milk than the true child of charity does when united, as he incessantly is, to his God, and folded

<sup>1</sup> Gr. 7, 27, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Grad. 30, n. 12.



as it were in the arms of his heavenly Father.<sup>1</sup> St John Climacus composed the following prayer to obtain the gift of charity: "My God, I pretend to nothing upon this earth, except to be so firmly united to you by prayer that to be separated from you may be impossible; let others desire riches and glory; for my part, I desire but one thing, and that is, to be inseparably united to you, and to place in you alone all my hopes of happiness and repose."

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 30 :*

ST JOHN CLIMACUS: ST REGULUS or Rieul, first Bishop of Senlis, to which see he was appointed, having converted that part of the country: and ST ZOSIMUS, Bishop of Syracuse, who succeeded the holy Bishop Peter, faithfully discharging all the duties of a worthy pastor until his death in 660.

### MARCH 31

## ST BENJAMIN, MARTYR, DEACON

(A.D. 424)

[From Theodoret, Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 39, &c.]

ISDEGERDES, son of Sapor III, put a stop to the cruel persecution against the Christians in Persia, which had been begun by Sapor II, and the church had enjoyed twelve years' peace in that kingdom when, in 420, it was disturbed by the indiscreet zeal of one Abdas, a Christian bishop, who burned down the Pyræum, or temple of fire, the great divinity of the Persians. King Isdegerdes threatened to demolish all the churches of the Christians unless he would rebuild it. Abdas had done ill in destroying the temple, but did well in refusing to rebuild it; for nothing can make it lawful to contribute to any act of idolatry, or to the building a temple, as Theodoret observes. Isdegerdes therefore demolished all the Christian churches in Persia, put to death Abdas, and raised a general persecution against the church, which continued forty years with great fury. Isdegerdes died the year following, in 421. But his son and successor, Varanes, carried on the persecution with greater inhumanity. The very description which Theodoret, a contemporary writer, and one that lived in the neighbourhood, gives of the cruelties he exercised on the Christians strikes us with horror: some were flayed alive in different parts of the body, and suffered all kinds of torture that could be invented: others, being stuck all over with sharp reeds, were hauled and rolled about in that condition; others were tormented divers other ways, such as nothing but the most hellish malice was capable of suggesting. Amongst these glorious champions of Christ was St Benjamin, a deacon. The tyrant caused him to be beaten and imprisoned. He had lain a year in the dungeon when an ambassador from the emperor obtained his enlargement on condition he should never speak to any of the courtiers about religion.

<sup>1</sup> Gr. n. 14.

The ambassador passed his word in his behalf that he would not; but Benjamin, who was a minister of the gospel, declared that he could not detain the truth in captivity, conscious to himself of the condemnation of the slothful servant for having hid his talent. He therefore neglected no opportunity of announcing Christ. The king, being informed that he still preached the faith in his kingdom, ordered him to be apprehended; but the martyr made no other reply to his threats than by putting this question to the king: What opinion he would have of any of his subjects who should renounce his allegiance to him, and join in war against him? The enraged tyrant caused reeds to be run in between the nails and the flesh both of his hands and feet, and the same to be thrust into other most tender parts, and drawn out again, and this to be frequently repeated with violence. He lastly ordered a knotty stake to be thrust into his bowels, to rend and tear them, in which torment he expired in the year 424. The Roman Martyrology places his name on the 31st of March.

St Ephrem, considering the heroic constancy of the martyrs, makes on them the following pious reflections: “. . . What excuse shall we have in the dreadful day of judgment, if we, who have never been exposed to any cruel persecutions, or to the violence of such torments, shall have neglected the love of God and the care of a spiritual life? No temptations, no torments, were able to draw them from that love which they bore to God; but we, living in rest and delights, refuse to love our most merciful and gracious Lord. Shall we present a lively faith? true charity towards God? a perfect disengagement of our affections from earthly things? souls freed from the tyranny of the passions? silence and recollection? meekness? almsdeeds? prayers poured forth with clean hearts? compunction, watchings, tears? Happy shall he be whom such good works shall attend. He will be the partner of the martyrs, and, supported by the treasure of these virtues, shall appear with equal confidence before Christ and his angels.”

*The following feasts are celebrated on March 31 :*

ST ACASIUS or Achates, Bishop of Antioch, in Asia Minor; surnamed “good angel” and honoured by the people for his holiness of life: it was owing to his zeal that not one of his flock renounced Christ by sacrificing to idols during the persecution of Decius. ST BENJAMIN: ST GUY, called by the Germans Witen, was for forty years Abbot of Pomposa, eminent in all virtue, especially in patience and love of solitude and of prayer.

APRIL 1

ST HUGH, CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF GRENOBLE

(A.D. 1132)

[From his life, written two years after his decease, by his intimate friend Guigo, fifth prior of the Great Chartreuse, by the order of Pope Innocent II. Bollandus ad Apr. 1, p. 36; Mabillon, *Annal. lib. lxvi. n. 34*; Pagi ad An. 1080; *Hist. Liter. de la France*, t. xi. p. 149.]

THE first tincture of the mind is of the utmost importance to virtue; and it was the happiness of this saint to receive from his cradle the strongest impressions of piety by the example and care of his illustrious and holy parents. He was born at Château-neuf, in the territory of Valence, in Dauphiné, in 1053. His father, Odilo, served his country in an honourable post in the army, in which he acquitted himself of his duty to his prince with so much the greater fidelity and valour, as he most ardently endeavoured to sanctify his profession, and all his actions, by a motive of religion. Being sensible that all authority which men receive over others is derived from God, with an obligation that they employ it, in the first place, for the advancement of the divine honour, he laboured, by all the means in his power, to make his soldiers faithful servants of their Creator, and by severe punishments to restrain vices, those especially of impurity and lying. By the advice of his son, St Hugh, he afterwards became a Carthusian monk, when he was upwards of fourscore years old, and lived eighteen years in great humility and austerity under St Bruno and his successors, in the Great Chartreuse, where he died one hundred years old, having received extreme unction and the viaticum from the hands of his son. Our saint likewise assisted in her last moments his mother, who had for many years, under his direction, served God in her own house, by prayer, fasting, and plenteous alms-deeds. Hugh, from the cradle, appeared to be a child of benediction. He went through his studies with great applause, and his progress in piety always kept pace with his advancement in learning. Having chosen to serve God in an ecclesiastical state, that he might always dwell in his house and be occupied in his praises, he accepted a canonry in the cathedral of Valence. In this station, the sanctity of his life and his extraordinary talents rendered him the ornament of that church; and the gentleness and affability of his deportment won him the affection of all his colleagues. He was tall and very comely, but naturally exceeding bashful; and such was his modesty that for some time he found means to conceal his learning and

eloquence; nevertheless, his humility served only to show afterwards those talents to more advantage and with greater lustre. For no virtue shines brighter with learning than modesty, as nothing renders scholars more odious or despicable than haughtiness and pride, which they discover by their obstinacy and clamours.

Hugh, then Bishop of Die, but soon after Archbishop of Lyons, and also cardinal legate of the holy see, was so charmed at first sight of the saint when he happened to come to Valence that he would not be contented till he had taken the good man into his household. He employed him in extirpating simony, and in many other affairs of importance. In 1080, the Legate Hugh held a synod at Avignon, in which he took under consideration the desolate condition and the grievous disorders into which the church of Grenoble was sunk through the sloth and bad example of its late mercenary pastor. The eyes of the legate and of the whole council were fixed on St Hugh as the person best qualified, by his virtue and prudence, to reform these abuses and restore the ancient glory of that church; and with them the voice of the whole city conspired. But his reluctance and fears were not to be overcome till he was compelled by the repeated commands of the legate and council. The legate took our newly appointed bishop with him to Rome, in order to his receiving the episcopal consecration from the hands of Gregory VII, who then sat in the chair of St Peter. The servant of God was glad of this opportunity of consulting the vicar of Christ concerning his own conscience; for during a great part of his life he had been extremely molested with troublesome temptations of importunate blasphemous thoughts against the divine providence. Pope Gregory, who was a man very well versed in the interior trial of souls, assured him that this angel of Satan was permitted by God, in his sweet mercy, to buffet him only for his trial and crown: which words exceedingly comforted the saint, and encouraged him to bear his cross with patience and joy.

The pious Countess Maud would needs be at the whole charge of the ceremony of his consecration: she also gave him a crosier and other episcopal ornaments, with a small library of suitable books, earnestly desiring to be instructed by his good counsels and assisted by his prayers. St Hugh, after his ordination, hastened to his flock; but being arrived at Grenoble, could not refrain his tears, and was exceedingly afflicted and terrified when he saw the diocese overrun with tares which the enemy had sown while the pastor slept. He found the people in general immersed in a profound ignorance of several essential duties of religion, and plunged in vice and immorality. Some sins seemed by custom to have lost their name, and men committed them without any scruple or sign of remorse. The negligence and backwardness of many in frequenting the sacraments indicated a total decay of piety, and could not fail introducing many

spiritual disorders in their souls, especially a great lukewarmness in prayer and other religious duties. Simony and usury seemed, under specious disguises, to be accounted innocent, and to reign almost without control. Many lands belonging to the church were usurped by laymen; and the revenues of the bishopric were dissipated, so that the saint, upon his arrival, found nothing either to enable him to assist the poor, or to supply his own necessities, unless he would have had recourse to unlawful contracts, as had been the common practice of many others, but which he justly deemed iniquitous; nor would he by any means defile his soul with them. He set himself in earnest to reprove vice and reform abuses. To this purpose he endeavoured by rigorous fasts, watchings, tears, sighs, and prayer to draw down the divine mercy on his flock; and so plentiful was the benediction of heaven upon his labours that he had the comfort to see the face of his diocese in a short time exceedingly changed. After two years, imitating therein the humility of some other saints, he privately resigned his bishopric, presuming on the tacit consent of the holy see; and, putting on the habit of St Bennet, he entered upon a noviciate in the austere abbey of Chaise-Dieu, or Casa-Dei, in Auvergne, of the reformation of Cluni. There he lived a year a perfect model of all virtues to that house of saints, till Pope Gregory VII commanded him, in virtue of holy obedience, to resume his pastoral charge. Coming out of his solitude, like another Moses descending from the conversation of God on the mountain, he announced the divine law with greater zeal and success than ever. The author of his life assures us that he was an excellent and assiduous preacher.

St Bruno and his six companions addressed themselves to him for his advice in their pious design of forsaking the world, and he appointed them a desert which was in his diocese, whither he conducted them in 1084. It is a frightful solitude, called the Chartreuse, or Carthusian Mountains, in Dauphiné, which place gave name to the famous order St Bruno founded there. The meek and pious behaviour of these servants of God took deep root in the heart of our holy pastor; and it was his delight frequently to visit them in their solitude, to join them in their exercises and austerities, and perform the meanest offices amongst them, as an outcast and one unworthy to bear them company. Sometimes the charms of contemplation detained him so long in this hermitage that St Bruno was obliged to order him to go to his flock, and acquit himself of the duties which he owed them. The remembrance of the divine love, or of his own and others' spiritual miseries, frequently produced a flood of tears from his eyes, which way soever he turned them; nor was he able sometimes to check them in company or at table, especially whilst he heard the holy scriptures read. In hearing confessions, he frequently mingled his tears with those of his penitents, or first excited theirs by his own. At his sermons it was not unusual to see the whole audience melt into tears together; and some

were so strongly affected that they confessed their sins publicly on the spot. After sermons, he was detained very long in hearing confessions. He often cast himself at the feet of others, to entreat them to pardon injuries, or to make some necessary satisfaction to their neighbours. His love of heavenly things made all temporal affairs seem to him burdensome and tedious.

He earnestly solicited Pope Innocent II for leave to resign his bishopric, that he might die in solitude; but was never able to obtain his request. God was pleased to purify his soul by a lingering illness before he called him to himself. Some time before his death he lost his memory for everything but his prayers; the psalter and the Lord's prayer he recited with great devotion, almost without intermission; and he was said to have repeated the last three hundred times in one night. Being told that so constant an attention would increase his distemper, he said, "It is quite otherwise; by prayer I always find myself stronger." St Hugh left us by his invincible patience a proof of the fervour of his charity. Under the sharpest pains, he never let fall one word of complaint nor mentioned what he suffered; his whole concern seemed only to be for others. When any assisted him, he expressed the greatest confusion and thankfulness: if he had given the least trouble to anyone, he would beg to receive the discipline, and because no one would give it to him, would confess his fault, as he called it, and implore the divine mercy with tears. The like sentiments we read in the relation of the deaths of many of the holy monks of La Trappe. Dom. Bennet, under the most racking pains, when turned in his bed, said, "You lay me too much at my ease." Dom. Charles would not cool his mouth with a little water in the raging heat of a violent fever. Such examples teach us at least to blush at and condemn our murmurs and impatience under sickness. The humility of St Hugh was the more surprising, because everyone approached him with the greatest reverence and affection, and thought it a happiness if they were allowed in any thing to serve him. It was his constant prayer, in which he begged his dear Carthusians and all others to join him, that God would extinguish in his heart all attachment to creatures, that his pure love might reign in all his affections. One said to him, "Why do you weep so bitterly, who never offended God by any wilful crime?" He replied, "Vanity and inordinate affections suffice to damn a soul. It is only through the divine mercy that we can hope to be saved, and shall we ever cease to implore it?" If anyone spoke of news in his presence, he checked them, saying, "This life is all given us for weeping and penance, not for idle discourses." He closed his penitential course on the 1st of April, in 1132, wanting only two months of being eighty years old, of which he had been fifty-two years bishop. Miracles attested the sanctity of his happy death; and he was canonized by Innocent II in 1134.

There is no saint who was not a lover of retirement and penance. Shall we not learn from them to shun the tumult of the world, as much as our circumstances will allow, and give ourselves up to the exercises of holy solitude, prayer, and pious reading. Holy solitude is the school of heavenly doctrine, where fervent souls study a divine science, which is learned by experience, not by the discourses of others. Here they learn to know God and themselves; they disengage their affections from the world, and burn and reduce to ashes all that can fasten their hearts to it. Here they give earthly things for those of heaven, and goods of small value for those of inestimable price. Moreover, in the interior exercises, of this state, a soul receives certain antepasts of eternal felicity, by which she intimately feels how sweet God is, and learns to have no relish for anything but for him alone. "Oh, my friends," cried out a certain pious contemplative, "I take leave of you with these words, and this feeling invitation of the Psalmist: 'Come, taste yourselves, and see by your own experience how sweet the Lord is.'" But these, and other privileges and precious advantages, only belong to the true solitary, who joins interior to exterior solitude, is never warped by sloth or remissness, gives no moments to idleness, uses continual violence to himself in order perfectly to subdue his passions, watches constantly over his senses, is penetrated to the heart with the wholesome sadness of penance.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 1:*

ST GILBERT, Bishop of Caithness; he held the see with great sanctity for twenty years and died April 1, 1240: ST HUGH, Bishop of Grenoble: ST MELITO, Bishop of Sardes, in Lydia, confessor, in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, to whom he addressed an eloquent and modest apology for the faith. He was surnamed "The Prophet."

## APRIL 2

### ST FRANCIS OF PAULA, CONFESSOR, FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF MINIMS

(A.D. 1508)

[From the bull of his canonization, and the memoirs relating to it, with the notes of Papebroke, t. i.; Apr. p. 103; also Philip Commines, b. vi. c. 8. See Le Fevre, Cont. of Fleury, b. cxv. n. 111, 120, 144; Helyot, Hist. des Ord. Relig. t. ix. p. 426; Giry, a provincial of his Order, in his "Lives of Saints," and in a particular dissertation; and De Coste, of the same Order, in his judicious and accurate life of this saint, in quarto.]

THIS saint was born about the year 1416, at Paula, a small city near the Tyrrhenian Sea, in Calabria, the midway from Naples to Reggio. His parents were very poor but industrious, and happy in their condition, making the will and love of God the sole object of all their desires and endeavours. Their whole conduct was, as it were, one straight line directed to this point. Having lived together several years without issue, they earnestly begged of God, through the intercession of St Francis of Assisi

a son who might faithfully and assiduously serve him, and become an instrument to glorify his name, to whose service they solemnly devoted him. A son some time after this was born, whom they considered as the fruit of their prayers, named him after their patron, St Francis, and made it their chief care to inspire him with pious sentiments, and give him an education suitable to his holy destination. Francis, whilst yet a child, made abstinence, solitude, and prayer his delight. In the thirteenth year of his age, his father, whose name was James Martotille, placed him in the convent of Franciscan friars at St Mark's, an episcopal town of that province, where he learned to read, and laid the foundation of the austere life which he ever after led. He, from that time, denied himself all use of linen and flesh meat; and though he had not professed the rule of that Order, he seemed, even in that tender age, to surpass all the religious in a scrupulous observance of everything prescribed by it. Having spent one year here, he performed, with his parents, a pilgrimage to Assisium, the Portiuncula, and Rome. When he was returned to Paula, with their consent he retired to a lonesome solitude about half a mile from the town; and, to avoid the distraction of visits, he shortly after chose a more remote retreat in the corner of a rock upon the sea-coast, where he made himself a cave. He was scarce fifteen years old when he shut himself up in this hermitage, in 1432. He had no other bed than the rock itself, nor other food than the herbs which he gathered in the neighbouring wood, or what was sometimes brought him by his friends. Before he was quite twenty years old, two other devoutly inclined persons joined him, imitating his holy exercises. The neighbours built them three cells and a chapel, in which they sung the divine praises, and a certain priest from the parish church came and said mass for them. This is reputed the first foundation of his religious Order, in 1436. Near seventeen years after, their number being much increased, with the approbation of the Archbishop of Cosenza, a large church and monastery were built for them in the same place towards the year 1454. So great was the devotion of the people that the whole country joined, and all hands were set to this work; even noblemen would share in carrying burdens. During the erection of this building, our saint performed several miracles. Among others, a person deposed upon oath in the process of the saint's canonization that he himself was healed in an instant of a painful lameness in his thigh by the prayer of the servant of God. When the house was completed, he applied himself to establish regularity and uniformity in his community, not abating in the least of his former severity with regard to himself. His bed was no longer indeed the rock, but it was a board or the bare floor, with a stone or a log of wood for his pillow, till, in his old age, he made use of a mat. He allowed himself no more sleep than was absolutely necessary to refresh weary nature. He took but one repast a day, in the evening, and usually



nothing but bread and water. Sometimes he passed two days without taking any food, especially before great festivals.

Penance, charity, and humility he laid down for the ground-work and basis of his rule. He obliged his followers to observe a perpetual Lent, and always to abstain, not only from flesh, but also from all white meats, or food made of milk, such as cheese, butter, &c., also from eggs, all which the ancient canons forbid in Lent. In order more effectually to enforce obedience to this injunction, he prescribed a fourth vow, by which every religious of his Order binds himself to observe it. His intention in enjoining this perpetual abstinence was to repair, in some sort, the abuses of Lent among Christians. He always lamented to see that holy fast so much relaxed by the mitigations which the church has been obliged to tolerate, in condescension to the lukewarmness of the generality of her children. He hoped also, by example, to open the eyes of the rest of the faithful, to whom the sight of such a perpetual Lent, compared to their remissness in one of only forty days, might be a continual reproach and silent preaching, perhaps more effectual than by words. The saint took Charity for the motto and symbol of his Order, to show it was to be its soul and its most distinguishing characteristic, whereby to signify the intimate union of all its members, not only with one another, but with all the faithful, by their ardent love of God, that divine flame which glowed so warmly in his own breast, and which he eagerly endeavoured to kindle in all others. Humility, however, was his darling virtue. An humility which sets itself forth with an exterior show of piety, which draws respect, and receives honour, is generally false. But the humility of Francis was both true and secure, because hidden. When God discovered him to the world, the saint conversed with it so as always to retain the same spirit. Not yet twenty years old, he was the legislator and oracle of all who approached him; yet he was no ways elated on this account, he assumed nothing to himself, and professed that he knew nothing save Jesus Christ crucified, and that there is no virtue, no happiness, but in knowing our own littleness, and in being humble of heart with our divine Master. By this humility he was filled with the spirit of God, and by a wonderful prodigy of grace, at nineteen years of age became the founder of an eminent religious Order. Other Orders have their principal and distinguishing characters; some being remarkable for their poverty, others for austerity, others for prayer, holy zeal, &c. That of St Francis of Paula eminently includes all the above-mentioned; but to show his value for humility, which he most earnestly recommended to his followers as the ground of all Christian virtues, he gave them a name that might express it, and begged of the Pope, as a singular privilege, that his religious might be called Minims, to signify that they were the least in the house of God. Moreover, as in every community there must be a supreme,

St Francis would have the superior of each house in his Order called Corrector, to put him in continual remembrance that he is only the servant of all the rest, according to that of Luke xxii., "He who is greater among you, let him be as the least." But the more this saint humbled himself, the more did God exalt him.

The Archbishop of Cosenza approved the rule and Order of this holy man in 1471. Pope Sixtus IV confirmed it by a bull, dated the 23rd of May, in 1474, and established Francis superior-general. This Order was then chiefly composed of laymen, with a few clerks, and only one priest, Balthasar de Spino, doctor of laws, afterwards confessor to Innocent VIII. About the year 1476, the saint founded another convent at Paterno, on the gulf of Tarentum; and a third at Spezza, in the diocese of Cosenza. In the year 1479, being invited into Sicily, he was received there as an angel from heaven, wrought miracles, and built several monasteries in that island, where he continued a whole year. Being returned into Calabria, in 1480, he built another at Corigliano, in the diocese of Rossano. Ferdinand, King of Naples, provoked at some wholesome advice the saint had given him and his two sons, Alphonsus, Duke of Calabria, and John, Cardinal of Arragon, persecuted him; but his third son, Frederic, Prince of Tarentum, was his friend. The king, alleging that he had built monasteries without the royal assent, ordered a messenger to apprehend him at Paterno, and bring him prisoner to Naples. But the officer, approaching to seize his person, was so moved at his humility and the readiness with which he disposed himself to follow him that, struck with awe, he returned to Naples and dissuaded the king from attempting any thing against the servant of God. The holy man was favoured with an eminent spirit of prophecy. He foretold to several persons, in the years 1447, 1448, and 1449, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, which happened on the 29th of May, in 1453, under the command of Mahomet II, when Constantine Palæologus, the last Christian emperor, was slain, fighting tumultuously in the streets. He also foretold that Otranto, one of the most important places and keys of the kingdom of Naples, would fall into the hands of the same infidels, three months before Achmat Bacha surprised it on the last day of August 1480, to the great consternation of Italy and all Europe. But the servant of God promised the Christians, especially the pious John, Count of Arena, one of the generals of Ferdinand I, King of Naples, certain success the year following, when they recovered that city, and drove the infidels out of Italy, their victory being facilitated by the death of the Turkish emperor, and a civil war between the two brothers, Bajazet II and Zizimes. The authentic depositions of many unexceptionable witnesses, given with all the formalities which both the civil and canon law require, prove these and many other illustrious predictions of the holy man, on several public and private

occasions,<sup>1</sup> with regard to the Kings of Naples, Ferdinand I, and Alphonsus II, and Louisa of Savoy, countess, afterwards Duchess of Angouleme, mother of King Francis I, in France, and many others. Lawrence, Bishop of Grenoble, of the most noble house of Alemans, in Dauphiné, uncle to the most valiant and pious Captain De Bayard,<sup>2</sup> in his letter to Pope Leo X for the canonization of St Francis, writes, "Most holy Father, he revealed to me many things which were known only to God and myself." In 1469, Pope Paul II sent one of his chamberlains, an ecclesiastic of the noble family of Adorno, in Genoa, into Calabria, to inform himself of the truth of the wonderful things that were related of the saint. The chamberlain addressed himself to the vigilant Archbishop of Cosenza, who assured him, from his own intimacy with the saint, of his sincere virtue and extraordinary sanctity, and sent one of his ecclesiastics, named Charles Pyrrho, a canon of Cosenza, a man of great learning and probity, to attend him to Paula. This Pyrrho had been himself healed ten years before of a violent toothache by the man of God touching his cheek with his hand (of which the authentic depositions are extant), and had from that time frequently visited him. The saint was at work, according to his custom, among the masons who were laying the foundation of his church, but seeing two strangers coming towards him, left his work and came to meet them. He made them a low obeisance; and when the chamberlain offered to kiss his hand, according to the Italian custom of saluting priests and religious men, he would by no means allow it; and falling on his knees, said he was bound to kiss his hands, which God had consecrated for the thirty years he had said mass. The chamberlain was exceedingly struck at his answer, hearing him, who was an entire stranger to his person, tell him so exactly how long he had been a priest; but, concealing himself and his commission, desired to converse with him in his convent. The saint conducted him into a chamber. The chamberlain, who was a very eloquent man, made him a long discourse, in which, to try his virtue, he censured his institute as too austere; spoke much on the illusions and dangers to which extraordinary and miraculous gifts are liable, and exhorted him to walk in ordinary paths, trodden by eminent servants of God. The saint answered his objections with great modesty and humility; but seeing him not yet satisfied, he went to the fire, and taking out some burning coals, held them a considerable time in his hand without receiving any harm, saying, "All creatures obey those who serve God with a perfect heart," which golden words are inserted by Leo X in the bull of his canonization. The chamberlain returned to Cosenza full of admiration for the holy man, and told both the archbishop and his holiness at his return to Rome that the sanctity of Francis was greater than his reputation in the world.

<sup>1</sup> See many of these depositions in De Coste, part 2, and Bollandus.

<sup>2</sup> Surnamed *Le Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*.

Lewis XI, King of France, a prince perhaps the most absolute, the most tenacious of his authority, jealous of his prerogative, and impatient of control, that ever wore that crown, after an apoplectic fit fell into a lingering decay.<sup>1</sup> Never had any man a stronger passion for life, or a greater dread of the very thoughts of death. Such was his frowardness and impatience that everyone trembled to approach him, nor durst any ask him a favour. He gave his physician ten thousand crowns a month, as long as he should prolong his life, and stood in the greatest awe of him. He shut himself up in his palace or castle of Plessis-les-Tours, near the city of Tours. His distemper still increasing, he sent an ambassador to our holy hermit in Calabria, begging he would come to see him and restore his health, making the greatest promises to serve both him and his Order. Hearing that the man of God would not be prevailed on by his promises to comply with his request, he entreated Ferdinand, King of Naples, to send him. Francis answered, positively, that he could not tempt God, or undertake a voyage of a thousand miles to work a miracle, which was asked upon low and merely human motives. Lewis did not yet desist, but desired the pope to interpose in favour of his request. Sixtus IV, by two briefs, commanded Francis immediately to repair to the king. Hereupon the obedient saint without delay set out, and passed through Naples, where he was exceedingly honoured by King Ferdinand. He took also Rome in his way, where he was treated with the highest distinction by the pope and cardinals. Embarking at Ostia, he landed in France, and cured many sick of the plague in Provence as he passed. Lewis, in great joy, gave a purse of ten thousand crowns to him who brought the first news of the saint's arrival in his dominions, and sent the dauphin, with the principal lords of his court, to meet him at Amboise, and to conduct him to his palace. The saint arrived at Plessis on the 24th of April, in 1482. The king went out to meet him, attended with all his court, and, falling on his knees, conjured him to obtain of God the prolongation of his life. St Francis told him no wise man ought to entertain such a desire; to which he added this useful lesson, that the lives of kings had their appointed limits no less than those of his meanest subjects; that God's decree was unchangeable; and that there remained nothing to be done but for his majesty to resign himself to the divine will, and prepare for a happy death. By his prayers and exhortations he effected a perfect change in the king's heart, who, having recommended to him his three children, and the repose of his soul, died in his arms, perfectly resigned, on the 30th of August, in 1483.

King Charles VIII honoured the saint even more than his father Lewis had done; would do nothing in the affairs of his conscience, or even in those of the state, without his advice; visited him every day as

<sup>1</sup> Commynes, b. vi. c. 7, 8, 12; Mezeray, &c.

long as he stayed at Plessis, standing before him as a disciple, and engaged him to stand godfather to his son, the dauphin, to whom he gave the name of our saint. He built for him a beautiful convent in the park of Plessis, in a place called Montils; and another at Amboise, and upon the very spot where he met him when he was dauphin; and going to Rome in 1495, where he made a triumphant entry, and was saluted Emperor of Constantinople by Pope Alexander VI, he built there, on Mount Pincio, a stately monastery for this Order, under the name of the Blessed Trinity, in which none but Frenchmen can be admitted. In his reign the saint founded the convent of Nigeon, near Paris, on which occasion two doctors, who had violently opposed the institute before the Bishop of Paris, were so moved by the sight of the saint at Plessis that they entered his Order in 1506. Pope Julius II again approved the rule, in which the saint had made some alterations. King Charles VIII dying in 1498, Lewis XII succeeded him. He at first gave the saint leave to return to Italy, but quickly recalled it, and heaped honours and benefactions on all his relations. St Francis spent the three last months of his life within his cell, to prepare himself for a happy death, denying himself all communication with mankind, that nothing might divert his thoughts from death and eternity. He fell sick of a fever on Palm Sunday, in 1506. After having made his confession, he communicated barefoot, and with a cord about his neck, which is the custom of his Order. He died on the 2nd of April, in 1508, being ninety-one years old. He was canonized by Leo X in 1519. His body remained uncorrupted in the church of Plessis-les-Tours till the year 1562, when the Huguenots broke open the shrine and found it entire, fifty-five years after his death. They dragged it about the streets, and burned it in a fire which they had made with the wood of a great crucifix.<sup>1</sup> Some of his bones were recovered by the Catholics, and are kept in several churches of his Order at Plessis, Nigeon, Paris, Aix, Naples, Paula, and Madrid. In Tours the same Calvinists burned the body of St Martin, Alcuin, and many others. But Lewis of Bourbon, Duke of Montpensier, Governor of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine, a virtuous and valiant prince, soon gave chase to those sacrilegious plunderers, and restored the churches and religious places to their former possessors. St Francis wrote two rules for his friars, with a Correctorium, or method of enjoining penances, and a third rule for nuns—all approved by Pope Julius II in 1506.

Vanity and the love of the world make men fond of producing themselves in public, and by having never cultivated an acquaintance with themselves they shun the very means, look upon retirement as intolerable, and pass their life in wandering always from home, and in a studied series

<sup>1</sup> Baillet; Helyot, *Hist. des Ord. Relig.* Le Fevre; the *Contin. of Fleury*; Croisset.

of dissipation, in which they secretly seek the gratification of their vanity, sloth, and other passions, but meet only with emptiness, trouble, and vexation. Man can find happiness only in God and in his own heart. This he flies who cannot bear to converse with God and his own heart. On the contrary, he who is endued with the spirit of prayer finds the greatest relish in the interior exercises of compunction and contemplation, and in conversing with heaven. Solitude is his chief delight and his centre; here he lives sequestered from creatures, and as if there were only God and himself in the world, except that he ceases not to recommend all men to God. In paying the debts of charity, and other exterior duties to his neighbours, his heart is fixed on God, and he has purely his divine will in view. "You are dead," says the apostle,<sup>1</sup> "and your life is hid with God in Jesus Christ."

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 2 :*

ST APIAN, born in Lycea of illustrious parents; he studied eloquence, philosophy, and the Roman laws, but having embraced the Christian faith, he was tortured and finally martyred on this date in 306, being in his nineteenth year: ST BRONACHA, titular saint of the parish of Kill-Broncha, Dromore Diocese: BLESSED CONSTANTIUS, King of Scotland, slain while marching against the infidels. He repeated the words of the 77th Psalm in his last moments: ST EBBA and her companions, nuns of the great monastery of Coldingham, Berwickshire. Their house being burned by Danish pirates, these holy virgins perished in the flames: ST FRANCIS OF PAULA: BLESSED JOHN PAYNE, priest, English martyr, 1582: ST NICETIUS, Archbishop of Lyons: and ST THEODOSIA, virgin and martyr. "Nothing could draw from her the least complaint or sigh."

### APRIL 3

## ST AGAPE, ST CHIONIA, AND ST IRENE, SISTERS, AND THEIR COMPANIONS, MARTYRS

(A.D. 304)

[From their original acts, abridged out of the presidial. court registers of Thessalonica, in Surius, Ruinart. p. 421; Tillemont, t. v. pp. 240 and 680; Ceillier, t. iii. p. 490.]

THESE three sisters lived at Thessalonica, and their parents were heathens when they suffered martyrdom. In the year 303, the Emperor Diocletian published an edict forbidding, under pain of death, any person to keep the holy scriptures. These saints concealed many volumes of those sacred books, but were not discovered or apprehended till the year following, when, as their acts relate, Dulcetius, the governor, being seated in his tribunal, Artemesius, the secretary, said, "If you please, I will read an information given in by the Stationary, concerning several persons here present." Dulcetius said, "Let the information be read." The solicitor read as follows: "The Pensioner Cassander to Dulcetius, President of Macedonia, greeting. I send to your highness six Christian women, with a man, who have refused to eat meats sacrificed to the gods. They are called Agape, Chionia, Irene, Casia, Philippa, Eutychia, and the man's

<sup>1</sup> Colos. iii. 8.

name is Agatho, therefore I have caused them to be brought before you." The president, turning to the women, said, "Wretches, what madness is this of yours, that you will not obey the pious commands of the emperors and Cæsars?" He then said to Agatho, "Why will you not eat of the meats offered to the gods, like other subjects of the empire?" He answered, "Because I am a Christian."

Dulcetius next addressed himself to Agape, saying, "What are your sentiments?" Agape answered, "I believe in the living God, and will not by an evil action lose all the merit of my past life." Then the president said, "What say you, Chionia?" She answered, "I believe in the living God, and for that reason did not obey your orders." The president, turning to Irene, said, "Why did not you obey the most pious command of our emperors and Cæsars?" Irene said, "For fear of offending God."

*President.* "But what say you, Casia?" She said, "I desire to save my soul."

*Pres.* "Will not you partake of the sacred offerings?"

*Casia.* "By no means."

*Pres.* "But you, Philippa, what do you say?" She answered, "I say the same thing."

*Pres.* "What is that?"

*Philippa.* "That I had rather die than eat of your sacrifices."

*Pres.* "And you, Eutychia, what do you say?" "I say the same thing," said she; "that I had rather die than do what you command."

*Pres.* "Are you married?"

*Eutychia.* "My husband has been dead almost these seven months."

*Pres.* "By whom are you with child?" She answered, "By him whom God gave me for my husband."

*Pres.* "I advise you, Eutychia, to leave this folly, and resume a reasonable way of thinking; what do you say? will you obey the imperial edict?"

*Eut.* "No; for I am a Christian, and serve Almighty God."

*Pres.* "Eutychia being big with child, let her be kept in prison."

Afterwards Dulcetius added, "Agape, what is your resolution? will you do as we do, who are obedient and dutiful to the emperors?"

*Agape.* "It is not proper to obey Satan; my soul is not to be overcome by these discourses."

*Pres.* "And you, Chionia, what is your final answer?" "Nothing can change me," said she.

*Pres.* "Have you not some books, papers, or other writings, relating to the religion of the impious Christians?" Chionia said, "We have none; the emperors now reigning have taken them all from us."

*Pres.* "Who drew you into the persuasion?" She said, "Almighty God."

*Pres.* "Who induced you to embrace this folly?" Chionia repeated again, "Almighty God and his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Dulc.* "You are all bound to obey our most puissant emperors and Cæsars." Then he read their sentence, which was worded as follows: "I condemn Agape and Chionia to be burnt alive, for having out of malice and obstinacy acted in contradiction to the divine edicts of our lords the emperors and Cæsars, and who at present profess the rash and false religion of Christians, which all pious persons abhor." He added, "As for the other four, let them be confined in close prison during my pleasure."

After these two had been consumed in the fire, Irene was a third time brought before the president. Dulcetius said to her: "Your madness is plain, since you have kept to this day so many books, parchments, codicils, and papers of the scriptures of the impious Christians. You were forced to acknowledge them when they were produced before you, though you had before denied that you had any. You will not take warning from the punishment of your sisters, neither have you the fear of death before your eyes, your punishment therefore is unavoidable. In the meantime I do not refuse even now to make some condescension in your behalf. Notwithstanding your crime, you may find pardon and be freed from punishment if you will yet worship the gods. What say you then? will you obey the orders of the emperors? are you ready to sacrifice to the gods, and eat of the victims?"

*Irene.* "By no means; for those that renounce Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are threatened with eternal fire."

*Pres.* "Where did you hide yourselves last year, when the pious edict of our emperors was first published?"

*Irene.* "Where it pleased God, in the mountains."

*Pres.* "With whom did you live?"

*Irene.* "We were in the open air; sometimes on one mountain, sometimes on another."

*Pres.* "Who supplied you with bread?"

*Irene.* "God, who gives food to all flesh."

*Pres.* "Was your father privy to it?"

*Irene.* "No; he had not the least knowledge of it."

*Pres.* "Which of your neighbours knew it?"

*Irene.* "Inquire in the neighbourhood, and make your search."

*Dulc.* "Your sisters have already suffered the punishments to which they were condemned. As for you, Irene, though you were condemned to death before your flight for having hid these writings, I will not have you die so suddenly; but I order that you be exposed naked in a brothel,



and be allowed one loaf a day, to be sent you from the palace, and that the guards do not suffer you to stir out of it one moment under pain of death to them."

The infamous sentence was rigorously executed; but God protecting her, no man durst approach her, nor say or do any indecency to her. The president caused her to be brought again before him, and said to her, "You shall suffer the just punishment of your insolence and obstinacy." And having called for paper, he wrote this sentence: "Since Irene will not obey the emperor's orders and sacrifice to the gods, but, on the contrary, persists still in the religion of the Christians, I order her to be immediately burnt alive, as her sisters have been." Dulcetius had no sooner pronounced this sentence but the soldiers seized Irene, and brought her to a rising ground where her sisters had suffered martyrdom, and having lighted a large pile, ordered her to mount thereon. Irene, singing psalms and celebrating the glory of God, threw herself on the pile, and was there consumed in the ninth consulship of Diocletian, and the eighth of Maximian, on the 1st day of April; but Ado, Usuard, and the Roman Martyrology name St Agape and Chionia on the 3rd, and St Irene on the 5th of April.

These saints suffered a glorious martyrdom rather than to offend God by an action which several Christians at that time, on various foolish pretexts, excused to themselves. How many excuse to themselves notorious usuries, and a thousand frauds, detractions, slanders, revenge, antipathies, sensual fondnesses, and criminal familiarities, envy, jealousy, hypocrisy, pride, and numberless other crimes! How often do men canonize the grossest vices under the glorious names of charity, zeal, prudence, constancy, and other virtues! Whatever men are eagerly bent to commit, they easily find pretences to call lawful. A second cause of our practical errors are the example and false maxims of the world. We flatter ourselves that what everybody does must be lawful, as if the multitude of sinners could authorize any crime, or as if the rule by which Christ will judge us was the custom or example of others; or, lastly, as if the world had not framed a false system of morals very opposite to the gospel. A third source of this dreadful and common evil is an affected ignorance.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 3:*

SAINTS AGAPE, CHIONIA, and IRENE, sisters, and their companions, martyrs: ST NICETAS, Abbot, brought up under austere monastic rules by his father, who had become a monk after the death of his wife; he lived a life of mortification and was famed for many miracles: ST RICHARD, Bishop of Chichester and Confessor, Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Died in a hospital in Dover in 1253 and was canonized twelve years later: ST ULPIAN, a zealous young Christian of Tyre who, fired by the example of St Apian and others, having boldly confessed Christ, was first scourged then tortured on the rack and finally thrown into the sea.

APRIL 4

## ST ISIDORE, BISHOP OF SEVILLE

(A.D. 606)

[From his works and those of SS Braulio and Ildefonse, his disciples. His life, compiled by Luke, Bishop of Tuy, in Galicia, in 1236, extant in Mabillon, *Sæc. Ben. ii.*, shows not that accuracy and judgment which we admire in the books of that author against the Albigenses: nor is it here made use of.]

ST ISIDORE is honoured in Spain as the most illustrious doctor of that church, in which God raised him, says St Braulio,<sup>1</sup> to stem the torrent of barbarism and ferocity which everywhere followed the arms of the Goths, who had settled themselves in that kingdom in 412. The eighth great council of Toledo, fourteen years after his death, styles him "the excellent doctor, the late ornament of the Catholic Church, the most learned man, given to enlighten the latter ages, always to be named with reverence." The city Carthagenæ was the place of his birth, which his parents, Severian and Theodora, persons of the first quality in the kingdom, edified by the example of their extraordinary piety. His two brothers, Leander and Fulgentius, bishops, and his sister Florentina, are also honoured among the saints. Isidore having qualified himself in his youth for the service of the church by an uncommon stock of virtue and learning, assisted his brother, Leander, Archbishop of Seville, in the conversion of the Visigoths from the Arian heresy. This great work he had the happiness to see perfectly accomplished by his indefatigable zeal and labours, which he continued during the successive reigns of the kings Reccared, Liuba, Witeric, Gundemar, Sisebut, and Sisemund. Upon the decease of St Leander, in 600 or 601, he succeeded him in the see of Seville. He restored and settled the discipline of the church of Spain in several councils, of all of which he was the oracle and the soul. The purity of their doctrine, and the severity of the canons enacted in them, drawn up chiefly by him, are incontestable monuments of his great learning and zeal. In the council of Seville, in 619, in which he presided, he, in a public disputation, convinced Gregory (a bishop of the Acephali) of his error, who was come over from Syria; and so evidently did he confute the Eutychian heresy that Gregory upon the spot embraced the Catholic faith. In 610, the bishops of Spain, in a council held at Toledo, agreed to declare the archbishop of that city Primate of all Spain, as, they say, he had always been acknowledged; which decree King Gundemar confirmed by a law the same year, and St Isidore subscribed the same. Yet we find that in the fourth council of Toledo, in 633, the most famous of all the synods of Spain, though Justus, the Archbishop of Toledo, was present, St Isidore presided, not by the privilege of his see, but on the bare consideration of his extra-

<sup>1</sup> Prænot. lib. Isidor.

ordinary merit; for he was regarded as the eminent doctor of the churches of Spain. The city of Toledo was honoured with the residence of the Visigoth kings.

St Isidore, to extend to posterity the advantages which his labours had procured to the church, compiled many useful works, in which he takes in the whole circle of the sciences, and discovers a most extensive reading, and a general acquaintance with the ancient writers, both sacred and profane. In the moral parts his style is pathetic and moving, being the language of a heart overflowing with sentiments of religion and piety; and though elegance and politeness of style were not the advantage of that age, the diction of this father is agreeable and clear. The saint was well versed in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages.

St Ildefonse says that this saint governed his church near forty years, but cannot mean above thirty-six or thirty-seven. When he was almost fourscore years old, though age and fatigues had undermined and broken into his health, he never interrupted his usual exercises and labours. During the last six months of his life he increased his charities with such profusion that the poor of the whole country crowded his house from morning till night. Perceiving his end to draw near, he entreated two bishops to come to see him. With them he went to church, where one of them covered him with sackcloth, the other put ashes on his head, Clothed with the habit of penance, he stretched his hands towards heaven, prayed with great eagerness, and begged aloud the pardon of his sins. He then received from the hands of the bishops the body and blood of our Lord, recommended himself to the prayers of all that were present, remitted the bonds of all his debtors, exhorted the people to charity, and caused all the money which he had not as yet disposed of to be distributed among the poor. This done, he returned to his own house, and calmly departed this life on the fourth day after, which was the 4th of April, in the year 636, as is expressly testified by Ædemptus, his disciple, who was present at his death. His body was interred in his cathedral between those of his brother, St Leander, and his sister, St Florentina. Ferdinand, King of Castile and Leon, recovered his relics from the Moors and placed them in the church of St John Baptist at Leon, where they still remain.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 4 :*

ST ISIDORE, Bishop of Seville: ST PLATO, Abbot. Deprived of his parents by pestilence at an early age, he served his uncle, High Treasurer, with distinction. But his heart was set on heavenly things. He persuaded his three brothers to give themselves to God, freed his slaves, portioned his sisters (who became mothers of saints), and entered the monastery on top of Mount Olympus, of which he was later chosen Abbot, being renowned for humility and austerity.

APRIL 5

## ST VINCENT FERRER, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1419)

[From his life, written by Ranzano, Bishop of Lucera, in order to his canonization, in Henschenius, with the notes of Papebroke. See Tournon, *Hommes Illustres de l'Ordre de St Dominique*, t. iii.; Fleury, b. cx.]

ST VINCENT FERRER was born at Valentia, in Spain, on the 23rd of January 1357. His parents were persons distinguished for their virtue and alms-deeds. They made it their rule to distribute in alms whatever they could save out of the necessary expenses of their family at the end of every year. Two of their sons became eminent in the church: Boniface, who died general of the Carthusians, and St Vincent, who brought with him into the world a happy disposition for learning and piety, which were improved from his cradle by study and a good education. In order to subdue his passions, he fasted rigorously from his childhood every Wednesday and Friday. The passion of Christ was always the object of his most tender devotion. The blessed Virgin he ever honoured as his spiritual mother. Looking on the poor as the members of Christ, he treated them with the greatest affection and charity, which being observed by his parents, they made him the dispenser of their bountiful alms. They gave him for his portion the third part of their possessions, all which he in four days' time distributed amongst the poor. He began his course of philosophy at twelve years of age, and his theology at the end of his fourteenth year. His progress was such that he seemed a master in both studies at the age of seventeen; and by his affectionate piety he had obtained an eminent gift of tears in that tender age. His father having proposed to him the choice of a religious, an ecclesiastical, or a secular state, Vincent without hesitation said it was his earnest desire to consecrate himself to the service of God in the Order of St Dominick. His good parents with joy conducted him to a convent of that Order in Valentia, and he put on the habit in 1374, in the beginning of his eighteenth year.

He made a surprisingly rapid progress in the paths of perfection, taking St Dominick for his model. To the exercises of prayer and penance he joined the study and meditation of the holy scriptures and the reading of the fathers. Soon after his solemn profession he was deputed to read lectures of philosophy, and at the end of his course published a treatise on Dialectic Suppositions, being not quite twenty-four years old. He was then sent to Barcelona, where he continued his scholastic exercises, and at the same time preached the word of God with great fruit, especially during a great famine, when he foretold the arrival of two vessels loaded with corn, the same evening, to relieve the city, which happened, contrary to all expectation. From thence he was sent to Lerida, the most famous

university of Catalonia. There continuing his apostolic functions and scholastic disputations, he commenced doctor, receiving the cap from the hands of Cardinal Peter de Luna, legate of Pope Clement VII, in 1384, being twenty-eight years of age. At the earnest importunities of the bishop, clergy, and people of Valentia, he was recalled to his own country, and pursued there both his lectures and his preaching with such extraordinary reputation, and so manifestly attended with the benediction of the Almighty, that he was honoured in the whole country above what can be expressed. As an humiliation, God permitted an angel of Satan to molest him with violent temptations of the flesh, and to fill his imagination with filthy ideas, the fiend rather hoping to disturb than seduce him. Also a wicked woman, who entertained a criminal passion for our saint, feigned herself sick, and sending for him on pretence of hearing her confession, took that occasion to declare to him her vicious inclinations, and did all in her power to pervert him. The saint, like another Joseph, in the utmost horror, and in an humble distrust of himself, without staying to answer her one word, betook himself to flight. The unhappy woman, enraged at his conduct, acted the part of Potiphar's wife in calumniating him. But her complaints meeting with little or no credit, she, upon reflection, became sensible of her fault, and being stung with remorse, made him public amends to the best of her power. The saint most readily pardoned her, and cured a disturbance of mind into which she was fallen. The arms which the saint employed against the devil were prayer, penance, and a perpetual watchfulness over every impulse of his passions. His heart was always fixed on God, and he made his studies, labour, and all his other actions a continued prayer. The same practice he proposes to all Christians in his book entitled, *A Treatise on a Spiritual Life*, in which he writes thus: "Do you desire to study to your advantage? Let devotion accompany all your studies, and study less to make yourself learned than to become a saint. Consult God more than your books, and ask him, with humility, to make you understand what you read. Study fatigues and drains the mind and heart. Go from time to time to refresh them at the feet of Jesus Christ under his cross. Some moments of repose in his sacred wounds give fresh vigour and new lights. Interrupt your application by short but fervent and ejaculatory prayers; never begin or end your study but by prayer. Science is a gift of the Father of lights; do not therefore consider it as barely the work of your own mind or industry." He always composed his sermons at the foot of a crucifix, both to beg light from Christ crucified and to draw from that object sentiments wherewith to animate his auditors to penance and the love of God.

St Vincent had lived thus six years at Valentia, assiduously pursuing his apostolical labours under great persecutions from the devils and carnal men, but in high esteem among the virtuous, when Cardinal Peter de

Luna, legate of Clement VII in Spain, was appointed to go from thence in the same capacity to Charles VI, king of France. Arriving at Valentia in 1390, he obliged the saint to accompany him into France. While the cardinal, who had too much of the spirit of the world, was occupied in politics, Vincent had no other employ or concern than that of the conversion of souls and the interests of Jesus Christ; and the fruits of his labours in Paris were not less than they had been in Spain. In the beginning of the year 1394 the legate returned to Avignon, and St Vincent, refusing his invitations to the court of Clement VII, went to Valentia. Clement VII dying at Avignon in 1394, during the great schism, Peter de Luna was chosen pope by the French and Spaniards, and took the name of Benedict XIII. He commanded Vincent to repair to Avignon and made him master of the Sacred Palace. The saint laboured to persuade Benedict to put an end to the schism, but obtained only promises, which the ambitious man often renewed, but always artfully eluded. Vincent in the meantime applied himself to his usual functions, and by his preaching reformed the city of Avignon; but, to breathe a free air of solitude, he retired from court to a convent of his Order. Benedict offered him bishoprics and a cardinal's hat, but he steadfastly refused all dignities; and, after eighteen months, earnestly entreated to be appointed apostolical missionary; and so much did the opinion of his sanctity prevail that the opposing his desire was deemed an opposition to the will of heaven. Benedict therefore granted his request, gave him his benediction, and invested him with the power of apostolical missionary, constituting him also his legate and vicar.

Before the end of the year 1398, St Vincent being forty-two years old, set out from Avignon towards Valentia. He preached in every town with wonderful efficacy; and the people having heard him in one place followed him in crowds to others. Public usurers, blasphemers, debauched women, and other hardened sinners everywhere were induced by his discourses to embrace a life of penance. He converted a prodigious number of Jews and Mahometans, heretics and schismatics. He visited every province of Spain in this manner, except Galicia. He returned thence into France, and made some stay in Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné. He went thence into Italy, preaching on the coasts of Genoa, in Lombardy, Piedmont, and Savoy; as he did in part of Germany, about the Upper Rhine, and through Flanders. Such was the fame of his missions that Henry IV, King of England, wrote to him in the most respectful terms, and sent his letter by a gentleman of his court, entreating him to preach also in his dominions. He accordingly sent one of his own ships to fetch him from the coast of France, and received him with the greatest honours. The saint having employed some time in giving the king wholesome advice, both for himself and his subjects, preached in the chief towns of England, Scotland,

and Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Returning into France, he did the same from Gascony to Picardy. Numerous wars, and the unhappy great schism in the church, had been productive of a multitude of disorders in Christendom; gross ignorance, and a shocking corruption of manners, prevailed in many places; whereby the teaching of this zealous apostle, who, like another Boanerges, preached in a voice of thunder, became not only useful but even absolutely necessary, to assist the weak and alarm the sinner. The ordinary subjects of his sermons were sin, death, God's judgments, hell, and eternity. He delivered his discourses with so much energy that he filled the most insensible with terror. At his sermons he was frequently obliged to stop to give leisure for the sobs and sighs of the congregation. His sermons were not only pathetic, but were also addressed to the understanding, and supported with a wonderful strength of reasoning, and the authorities of scriptures and fathers, which he perfectly understood and employed as occasion required. His gift of miracles, and the sanctity of his penitential life, gave to his words the greatest weight. Amidst these journeys and fatigues he never ate flesh, fasted every day except Sundays, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he lived on bread and water, which course he held for forty years: he lay on straw or small twigs. He spent a great part of the day in the confessional, with incredible patience, and there finished what he had begun in the pulpit. He had with him five friars of his Order, and some other priests to assist him. Though by his sermons thousands were moved to give their possessions to the poor, he never accepted anything himself; and was no less scrupulous in cultivating in his heart the virtue and spirit of obedience than that of poverty; for which reason he declined accepting any dignity in the church or superiority in his Order. He laboured thus near twenty years, till 1417, in Spain, Majorca, Italy, and France. During this time, preaching in Catalonia, among other miracles he restored to the use of his limbs John Soler, a crippled boy, judged by the physicians incurable, who afterwards became a very eminent man and Bishop of Barcelona. In the year 1400 he was at Aix, in Provence; in 1401 in Piedmont and the neighbouring parts of Italy, being honourably received in the Obedience of each pope. Returning into Savoy and Dauphiné, he found there a valley called Vaupute, or Valley of Corruption, in which the inhabitants were abandoned to cruelty and shameful lusts. He joyfully exposed his life among these abandoned wretches, converted them all from their errors and vices, and changed the name of the valley into Valpure, or Valley of Purity, which name it ever after retained.

Being at Geneva in 1403, he wrote a letter to his general, still extant, in which, among other things, he informed him that, after singing mass

<sup>1</sup> It seems very unlikely that the Saint ever preached in Britain or Ireland: he certainly preached in Brittany, and perhaps A. Butler is confusing one region with the other.

he preached twice or thrice every day, preparing his sermons while he was on the road; that he had employed three months in travelling from village to village, and from town to town in Dauphiné announcing the word of God; making a longer stay in three valleys in the diocese of Embrun, namely, Lucerna, Argenteya, and Valpute, having converted almost all the heretics which peopled those parts: that being invited in the most pressing manner into Piedmont, he for thirteen months preached and instructed the people there, in Montserrat and the valleys, and brought to the faith a multitude of Vaudois and other heretics. He says the general source of their heresy was ignorance and want of an instructor, and cries out, "I blush and tremble when I consider the terrible judgment impending on ecclesiastical superiors who live at their ease in rich palaces, &c., whilst so many souls redeemed by the blood of Christ are perishing. 'I pray,' without ceasing, 'the Lord of the harvest that he send good workmen into his harvest.'"<sup>1</sup> He adds that he had in the valley of Luferia converted an heretical bishop by a conference; and extirpated a certain infamous heresy in the valley Pontia; converted the country into which the murderers of St Peter, the martyr, had fled; had reconciled the Guelphs and Gibelins, and settled a general peace in Lombardy. Being called back into Piedmont by the bishops and lords of that country, he stayed five months in the dioceses of Aoust, Tarentaise, St John of Morienne, and Grenoble. He says he was then at Geneva, where he had abolished a very inveterate superstitious festival—a thing the bishop durst not attempt; and was going to Lausane, being called by the bishop to preach to many idolaters who adored the sun, and to heretics, who were obstinate, daring, and very numerous on the frontiers of Germany. Thus in his letter. Spondanus<sup>2</sup> and many others say the saint was honoured with the gift of tongues, and that, preaching in his own, he was understood by men of different languages; which is also affirmed by Lanzano, who says that Greeks, Germans, Sardes, Hungarians, and people of other nations declared they understood every word he spoke, though he preached in Latin, or in his mother-tongue, as spoken at Valentia. Peter de Luna, called Benedict XIII, sent for him out of Lorraine to Genoa, promising to lay aside all claim to the papacy. The saint obeyed, and represented to him the evils of the schism, which would be all laid to his charge; but he spoke to one that was deaf to such counsels. He preached with more success to the people of Genoa for a month, and travelled again through France and Flanders, and from thence, in 1406, over all the dominions of Henry IV, King of England.<sup>3</sup> The years 1407 and 1408 he employed in reforming the manners of the people of Poitou, Gascony, Languedoc, Provence, and Auvergne; at Clermont is still shown the pulpit in which he preached in 1407. An inscription in a church at Nevers testifies the

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 2.<sup>2</sup> Spondan. ad. an. 1403.<sup>3</sup> See note on previous page.



same of that city: he was again at Aix in October 1408. Benedict XIII being returned from Genoa, stopped at Marseilles, and came no more to Avignon, but in 1408 went to Perpignan. In the same year the Mahometan King of the Moors, at Granada, in Spain, hearing the reputation of St Vincent, invited him to his court. The saint took shipping at Marseilles and preached to the Mahometans the gospel with great success at Granada. and converted many; till some of the nobles, fearing the total subversion of their religion, obliged the king to dismiss him. He then laboured in the kingdom of Arragon, and again in Catalonia, especially in the diocese of Gironne and Vich; in a borough of the latter he renewed the miracle of the multiplication of loaves, related at length in his life.<sup>1</sup> At Barcelona, in 1409, he foretold to Martin, King of Arragon, the death of his son. Martin, the King of Sicily, who was snatched away amidst his triumphs in the month of July. Vincent comforted the afflicted father, and persuaded him to a second marriage, to secure the public peace by an heir to his crown.

He cured innumerable sick everywhere, and at Valentia made a dumb woman speak, but told her she should ever after remain dumb, and that this was for the good of her soul; charging her always to praise and thank God in spirit, to which instructions she promised obedience. He converted the Jews in great numbers in the diocese of Palencia, in the kingdom of Leon, as Mariana relates. He was invited to Pisa, Sienna, Florence. and Lucca in 1410, whence, after having reconciled the dissensions that prevailed in those parts, he was recalled by John II, King of Castille. In 1411 he visited the kingdoms of Castille, Leon, Murcia, Andalusia, Asturias, and other countries; in all which places the power of God was manifested in his enabling him to work miracles, and effect the conversion of an incredible number of Jews and sinners. The Jews of Toledo embracing the faith changed their synagogue into a church under the name of Our Lady's. From Valladolid the saint went to Salamanca in the beginning of the year 1412, where meeting the corpse of a man who had been murdered, and was carrying on a bier, he, in the presence of a great multitude, commanded the deceased to arise, when the dead man instantly revived; for a monument of which a wooden cross was erected, and is yet to be seen on the spot. In the same city the saint entered the Jewish synagogue with a cross in his hand, and, replenished with the Holy Ghost, made so moving a sermon that the Jews, who were at first surprised, at the end of his discourse all desired baptism, and changed their synagogue into a church, to which they gave the title of the Holy Cross. But St Vincent was called away to settle the disputes which had for two years disturbed the tranquillity of the kingdom of Arragon, concerning a successor to the crown. The states of Arragon, Catalonia, and

<sup>1</sup> Bolland. p. 501, n. 23.

Valentia were divided. After having long endeavoured to move Peter de Luna to resign his pretensions to the papacy, but finding him obstinate, he advised King Ferdinand to renounce his obedience in case he refused to acknowledge the council of Constance; which that prince did by a solemn edict, dated the 6th of January, in 1416, by the advice of the saint, as Oderic Raynold, Mariana, and Spondanus most accurately relate. The saint laboured zealously to bring all Spain to this union, and was sent by King Ferdinand to assist at the council of Constance. He preached through Spain, Languedoc, and Burgundy in his way thither. The fathers of the council pressed his arrival, and deputed Hannibaldi, Cardinal of St Angelus, to consult him at Dijon, in 1417. Gerson wrote to him also an earnest letter expressing a high esteem of his person.<sup>1</sup> But it does not appear that St Vincent ever arrived at Constance, notwithstanding Dupin and some others think he did. The saint's occupations made him leave few writings to posterity. The chief of his works now extant are, A Treatise on a Spiritual Life, or On the Interior Man, A Treatise on the Lord's Prayer, A Consolation under Temptations, Against Faith, and Seven Epistles.

St Vincent having laboured some time in Burgundy, went from Dijon to Bourges, where he continued his apostolical functions with equal zeal. In that city he received pressing letters from John V, Duke of Brittany, inviting him to visit his dominions. The saint, convinced it was a call from God, passed by Tours, Angers, and Nantz in his way thither, being everywhere received as an angel from heaven, and in all places curing the sick and converting sinners. All the dioceses, towns, and countries of Brittany heard this apostle with great fruit, and were witnesses of his miracles. His age and infirmities were far from abating anything of his zeal and labours: he rooted out vices, superstitions, and all manner of abuses, and had the satisfaction to see a general reformation of manners throughout the whole province. Out of Brittany he wrote letters into Castille, by which he engaged the bishops, nobility, and Don Alphonsus, regent of that kingdom for King John the Second, yet a minor, to renounce Peter de Luna as an antipope, and acknowledge the council of Constance, to which they accordingly sent ambassadors, who were received with joy at Constance on the 3rd of April 1417. Pope Martin V, elected by the council in November, wrote to the saint, and deputed to him Montanus, an eminent theologian, confirming all his missionary faculties and authority. Henry V, King of England, being then at Caen in Normandy, entreated the saint to extend his zeal to that province. He did so; and Normandy and Brittany were the theatre of the apostle's labours the two last years of his life. He was then sixty years old, and so worn out and weak that he was scarce able to walk a step without help;

<sup>1</sup> Gerson, t. ii. p. 658, ed. nov.

yet no sooner was he in the pulpit but he spoke with as much strength, ardour, eloquence, and unction as he had done in the vigour of his youth. He restored to health on the spot one that had been bed-ridden eighteen years, in the presence of a great multitude, and wrought innumerable other miracles; amongst which we may reckon as the greatest the conversion of an incredible number of souls. He inculcated everywhere a detestation of law-suits, swearing, lying, and other sins, especially of blasphemy.

Falling at last into a perfect decay, his companions persuaded him to return to his own country. Accordingly he set out with that view, riding on an ass, as was his ordinary manner of travelling in long journeys. But after they were gone, as they imagined, a considerable distance; they found themselves again near the city of Vannes. Wherefore the saint perceiving his illness increase, determined to return into the town, saying to his companions that God had chosen that city for the place of his burial. The joy of the city was incredible when he appeared again, but it was allayed when he told them he was come, not to continue his ministry among them, but to look for his grave. These words, joined with a short exhortation which he made to impress on the people's minds their duty to God, made many to shed tears, and threw all into an excess of grief. His fever increasing, he prepared himself for death by exercises of piety and devoutly receiving the sacraments. On the third day the bishop, clergy, magistrates, and part of the nobility made him a visit. He conjured them to maintain zealously what he had laboured to establish amongst them, exhorted them to perseverance in virtue, and promised to pray for them when he should be before the throne of God, saying he should go to the Lord after ten days. His prayer and union with God he never interrupted. The magistrates sent a deputation to him, desiring he would choose the place of his burial. They were afraid his Order, which had then no convent in Vannes, would deprive the city of his remains. The saint answered that, being an unprofitable servant and a poor religious man, it did not become him to direct anything concerning his burial; however, he begged they would preserve peace after his death, as he had always inculcated to them in his sermons, and that they would be pleased to allow the prior of the convent of his Order which was the nearest to that town to have the disposal of the place of his burial. He continued his aspirations of love, contrition, and penance; and often wished the departure of his soul from its fleshy prison, that it might the more speedily be swallowed up in the ocean of all good. On the tenth day of his illness he caused the passion of our Saviour to be read to him, and after that recited the penitential psalms, often stopping totally absorbed in God. It was on Wednesday in Passion Week, the 5th of April, that he slept

in the Lord, in the year 1419, having lived, according to the most exact computation, sixty-two years, two months, and thirteen days. Joan of France, daughter of King Charles VI, Duchess of Brittany, washed his corpse with her own hands. God showed innumerable miracles by that water and by the saint's habit, girdle, instruments of penance, and other relics, of which the details may be read in the Bollandists. The duke and bishop appointed the cathedral for the place of his burial. He was canonized by Pope Calixtus III in 1455. But the bull was only published in 1458, by Pope Pius II. His relics were taken up in 1456. The Spaniards solicited to have them translated to Valentia, and at last resolved to steal them, thinking them their own property, to prevent which the canons hid the shrine in 1590. It was found again in 1637, and a second translation was made on the 6th of September, when the shrine was placed on the altar of a new chapel in the same cathedral, where it is still exposed to veneration.

The great humility of this saint appeared amidst the honours and applause which followed him. He lays down this principle as the preliminary to all virtue, that a person be deeply grounded in humility; "For whosoever will proudly dispute or contradict, will always stand without the door. Christ, the master of humility, manifests his truth only to the humble, and hides himself from the proud" (c. 1, p. 70). He reduces the rules of perfection to the avoiding three things: First, the exterior distraction of superfluous employs. Secondly, all interior secret elation of heart. Thirdly, all immoderate attachment to created things. Also to the practising of three things: First, the sincere desire of contempt and abjection. Secondly, the most affective devotion to Christ crucified. Thirdly, patience in bearing all things for the love of Christ (c. ult).

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 5 :*

ST BECAN, Abbot in Ireland ; known as one of the twelve apostles of Ireland : ST GERALD, Abbot of Suaue or Sylva-major, near Bordeaux, canonized in 1197 : ST TIGERNACH, Bishop and Confessor in Ireland. His mother was daughter to an Irish king and St Bridget was his godmother. Carried to Britain by pirates, he returned to Ireland, where he founded Clones Abbey. He became blind in his old age and spent his time in a cell in continual prayer : and ST VINCENT FERRER.

#### APRIL 6

### ST SIXTUS, OR XISTUS I, POPE AND MARTYR

#### (SECOND AGE)

[See Eus. b. iv. c. 4, 5 ; Tillemont, t. ii. p. 262.]

THIS holy pope succeeded St Alexander about the end of the reign of Trajan, and governed the church ten years at a time when that dignity was the common step to martyrdom; and in all martyrologies he is

honoured with the title of martyr. But it seems to be Sixtus II who is mentioned in the canons of the mass whose martyrdom was more famous in the church. A portion of the relics of St Sixtus I, given by Pope Clement X to Cardinal de Retz, was by him placed with great solemnity in the abbey of St Michael, in Lorrain.<sup>1</sup>

Those primitive pastors, who were chosen by God to be his great instruments in propagating his holy faith, were men eminently endued with the spirit of the most heroic Christian charity, so that we wonder not so much that their words and example were so powerful in converting the world, as that any could be so obstinate as to resist the spirit with which they delivered the divine oracles, and the miracles and sanctity of their lives with which they confirmed their mission. What veneration must not the morality of the gospel command when set off with all its lustre in the lives and spirit of those who profess it, seeing its bare precepts are allowed by deists and infidels themselves to be most admirable and evidently divine! Only the maxims of the gospel teach true and pure virtue, and are such as extort applause from its enemies. The religion of a God crucified is the triumph over self-love: it commands us to tame our rebellious flesh and subject it to the spirit; to divest ourselves of the old man and to clothe ourselves with the new; to forget injuries and to pardon enemies. In these virtues, in this sublime disposition of soul, consists true greatness; not in vain titles and empty names. Religion, barely for the maxims which it lays down and in which it is founded, claims the highest respect. The morality of the wisest pagan philosophers was mingled with several shocking errors and extravagances, and their virtues were generally defective in their motives. Worldly heroism is founded in vice or human weaknesses. It is at the bottom no better than a base ambition, avarice, or revenge, which makes many despise death, though they gild over their courage with the glorious name of zeal for their prince or country. Worldly actions spring not from those noble motives which appear, but from some base disorder of the soul or secret passion. Among the heathen philosophers, the Stoic led an austere life; but for the sake of a vain reputation. Thus he only sacrificed one passion to another; and whilst he insulted the Epicurean for his voluptuousness, was himself the dupe of his own illusion.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 6 :*

ST CELESTINE, Pope, chosen to succeed Pope Boniface : ST CELSUS, in Irish Ceallach, Bishop in Ireland : ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY MARTYRS of Hadiab, in Persia, of whom nine were virgins consecrated to God. They lay for six months in filthy dungeons and were often tortured. Finally, still refusing to worship the sun, their heads were struck off : ST PRUDENTIUS, Bishop of Troyes, a Spaniard by birth : ST SIXTUS, Pope : and ST WILLIAM, Abbot of Eskille, who ever cherished a great sense of the sanctity of the Mass. He had the joy of seeing many walk in his steps.

<sup>1</sup> See Baronius ad. an. 154.

APRIL 7

## BLESSED HERMAN JOSEPH, CONFESSOR

HE was born at Cologne, and at twelve years of age entered the monastery of Steinfeldt of regular canons of the Premonstratensian Order in the duchy of Juliers and diocese of Cologne. His incredible fasts and other austerities, and his extraordinary humility, joined with assiduous prayer and meditation, raised him to an eminent gift of contemplation, which replenished his soul with the most profound sentiments of all virtues, and was attended with many heavenly favours; but, as it is usual, this grace was often accompanied with severe interior trials. He was singularly devoted to the Blessed Virgin. At the very remembrance of the mystery of the incarnation, his soul seemed to melt in tender love; and he seemed in raptures whenever he recited the canticle Benedictus at Lauds. Such was his desire of contempt that he one day desired a peasant to strike him on the face. The other in surprise asked the reason. "On account," said he, "of my being a most filthy and abominable creature, and because I cannot meet with so much contempt as I deserve." He died on the 7th of April in 1226. He wrote a commentary on the book of Canticles, or Song of Solomon, and some other treatises on sublime contemplation, which may be ranked with those of other great masters in the contemplative way, as Thomas à Kempis, St Theresa, Thauler, Harphius, Blossius, Lanspergius, Hilton, &c. Bd. Herman is honoured among the saints in his Order, and in some churches in the Low Countries. In the abbey church of Steinfeldt he is titular saint of an altar, at which the priests who visit that church out of devotion to him say a votive mass in his honour before his relics, with proper prayers of the saint used in that abbey from time immemorial. Small portions of his relics have been given to several other churches. Some are enshrined and exposed to public veneration in the abbey of Premontr , at Antwerp; a portion is kept in the abbey of Parc, at Louvain; another in the parish church of St Christopher, at Cologne, and another at the Chartreuse in the same city. The Emperor Ferdinand II solicited his canonization at Rome, and several proofs of miracles and other particulars have been given in for that purpose. His name is inserted on the 7th of April in the martyrology of the regular canons of St Austin, approved by Benedict XIV, p. 275. See his life by a fellow-canon of great virtue in the Bollandists, on the 7th of April, t. i. p. 682; also two other lives, and several acts, collected in order to pursue the process for his canonization.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 7:*

ST AIBERT, recluse, who had applied himself to prayer from his infancy: ST APHRAATES, anchorite: ST FINIAN, of Ireland, a disciple of St Brendan: ST HEGESIPPAS, a primitive father near the time of the apostles. He was a Jew by birth: THE BLESSED EDWARD OLDCORNE, S.J., BLESSED HENRY WALPOLE, priest (whom Horace Walpole liked to remember was of his family), English martyrs beatified December 15, 1929: BLESSED HERMAN JOSEPH, a monk of extraordinary holiness who entered a monastery at twelve years of age.

APRIL 8

ST DIONYSIUS OF CORINTH, BISHOP, CONFESSOR  
(SECOND AGE)

[From Eusebius, b. iv. c. 23; St Jerom. Cat. c. 80.]

ST DIONYSIUS, Bishop of Corinth, flourished under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and was one of the most holy and eloquent pastors of the church in the second age. Not content assiduously to instruct his own flock with the word of life, he comforted and exhorted others at a distance. Eusebius mentions several of his instructive letters to other churches, and one of thanks to the church of Rome, under the pontificate of St Soter, for the alms received from them according to custom. "From the beginning," says he, "it is your custom to bestow your alms in all places, and to furnish subsistence to many churches. You send relief to the needy, especially to those who work in the mines; in which you follow the example of your fathers. Your blessed Bishop Soter is so far from degenerating from your ancestors in that respect that he goes beyond them; not to mention the comfort and advice he, with the bowels of a tender father towards his children, affords all that come to him. On this day we celebrated together the Lord's day, and read your letter, as we do that which was heretofore written to us by Clement." He means that they read these letters of instruction in the church, after the reading of the holy scriptures and the celebration of the divine mysteries. This primitive father says that SS Peter and Paul, after planting the faith at Corinth, went both into Italy, and there sealed their testimony with their blood. He in another place complains that the ministers of the devil, that is, the heretics, had adulterated his works, and corrupted them by their poison. The monstrous heresies of the three first centuries sprang mostly, not from any perverse interpretation of the scriptures, but from erroneous principles of the heathenish schools of philosophy; whence it happened that those heresies generally bordered on some superstitious notions of idolatry. St Dionysius, to point out the source of the heretical errors, showed from what sect of philosophers each heresy took its rise. The Greeks honour St Dionysius as a martyr on the 29th of November, because he suffered much for the faith, though he seems to have died in peace; the Latins keep his festival on this day, and style him only Confessor. Pope Innocent III sent to the abbey of St Denys, near Paris, the body of a saint of that name brought from Greece. The monks, who were persuaded that they were before possessed of the body of the Areopagite, take this second to be the body of St Dionysius of Corinth, whose festival they also celebrate.

We adore the inscrutable judgments of God, and praise the excess of his mercy in calling us to his holy faith, when we see many to whom it was announced with all the reasonable proofs of conviction reject its bright light and resist the voice of heaven; also others who had so far despised all worldly considerations as to have embraced this divine religion, afterwards fall from this grace, and become the authors or abettors of monstrous heresies, by which they drew upon themselves the most dreadful curses. The source of their errors was originally in the disorder of their hearts, by which their understanding was misled. The three main enemies which destroy it are, an attachment to creatures without us, an inordinate love of ourselves, and dissimulation or double dealing. This last, though most infamous and base, is a much more common vice than is generally imagined; for there are very few who are thoroughly sincere in their whole conduct towards God, their neighbour, and themselves. Perfect sincerity and an invariable uprightness is an essential part, yet only one ingredient of Christian simplicity. Nor is it enough to be also disengaged from all inordinate attachments to exterior objects: many who are free from the hurry and disturbance of things without them nevertheless are strangers to simplicity and purity of heart, being full of themselves, and referring their thoughts and actions to themselves, taking an inordinate complacency in what concerns them, and full of anxieties and fear about what befalls or may befall them. Simplicity of the heart, on the contrary, settles the soul in perfect interior peace; as a child is secure in the mother's arms, so is such a soul at rest in the bosom of her God, resigned to his will, and desiring only to accomplish it in all things. The inexpressible happiness and advantages of this simplicity can only be discovered by experience. This virtue disposes the heart to embrace the divine revelation when duly manifested, and removes those clouds which the passions raise, and which so darken the understanding that it is not able to discern the light of faith.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 8 :*

ST ÆDECIUS, brother to St Apian, who received his crown of martyrdom at Cæsarea : BLESSED ALBERT, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who composed the rules of the Carmelites : ST DIONYSIUS of Corinth : BLESSED JULIA BILLIART, 1751-1816, virgin, Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame : ST PERPETUUS, the eighth Bishop of Tours, a see he governed for about thirty years, leaving all his goods to the poor at his death : and ST WALTER, Abbot of St MARTIN'S, near Pontoise.

APRIL 9

ST MARY OF EGYPT

(FIFTH AGE)

[From her life commended in the seventh general council, and by St Sophonius, but written one hundred and fifty years before him, by a grave author of the same age in which the saint lived. See Papebroke, ad diem 2, Apr. t. i. p. 67, and Jos. Assemani Comm. in Calend. ad. 1, Apr. t. vi. p. 218.]

IN the reign of Theodosius the Younger there lived in Palestine a holy monk and priest named Zosimus, famed for the reputation of his sanctity,



and resorted to as an oracle for the direction of souls in the most perfect rules of a religious life. He had served God from his youth with great fervour, in the same house, for the space of three-and-fifty years, when he was tempted to think that he had attained to a state of perfection, and that no one could teach him anything more in regard to a monastic life. God, to discover the delusion and danger of this suggestion of the proud spirit, and to convince him that we may always advance in perfection, directed him by revelation to quit his monastery for one near the Jordan, where he might learn lessons of virtue he yet was unacquainted with. Being admitted amongst them, it was not long before he was undeceived, and convinced from what he saw practised there how much he had been mistaken in the judgment he had formed of himself and his advancement in virtue. The members of this community had no more communication with the rest of mankind than if they had belonged to another world. The whole employment of their lives was manual labour, which they accompanied with prayer, the singing of psalms (in which heavenly exercise they spent the whole night, relieving each other by turns), and their chief subsistence was on bread and water. It was their yearly custom, after having assisted at the divine mysteries and received the blessed Eucharist on the first Sunday in Lent, to cross the river and disperse themselves over the vast deserts which lie towards Arabia, to pass in perfect solitude the interval between that and Palm Sunday; against which time they all returned again to the monastery to join in celebrating the passion and resurrection of our Lord. Some subsisted during this time on a small parcel of provision they took with them, while others lived on the herbs which grew wild; but when they came back, they never communicated to each other what they did during that time.

About the year 430, the holy man Zosimus passed over the Jordan with the rest at the usual time, endeavouring to penetrate as far as he could into the wilderness, in hopes of meeting with some hermit of still greater perfection than he had hitherto seen or conversed with, praying with great fervour as he travelled. Having advanced thus for twenty days, as he one day stopped at noon to rest himself and recite a certain number of psalms, according to custom, he saw as it were the figure of a human body. He was at first seized with fright and astonishment; and imagining it might be an illusion of the enemy, he armed himself with the sign of the cross and continued in prayer. Having finished his devotions, he plainly perceived, on turning his eyes that way, that it was somebody that appeared naked, extremely sunburnt, and with short white hair, who walked very quick, and fled from him. Zosimus, judging it was some holy anchoret, ran that way with all speed to overtake him. He drew nearer by degrees, and when he was within hearing, he cried

out to the person to stop and bless him; who answered, "Abbot Zosimus, I am a woman; throw me your mantle to cover me, that you may come near me." He, surprised to hear her call him by his name, which he was convinced she could have known only by revelation, readily complied with her request. Having covered herself with his garment, she approached him, and they entered into conversation after mutual prayer: and on the holy man's conjuring her by Jesus Christ to tell him who she was, and how long and in what manner she had lived in that desert, she said, "I ought to die with confusion and shame in telling you what I am. I will, however, relate to you my ignominy, begging of you to pray for me, that God may show me mercy in the day of his terrible judgment."

"My country is Egypt. When my father and mother were still living, at twelve years of age I went without their consent to Alexandria: I cannot think, without trembling, on the first steps by which I fell into sin, nor my disorders which followed." She then described how she lived a public prostitute seventeen years, not for interest, but to gratify an unbridled lust. She added, "I continued my wicked course till the twenty-ninth year of my age, when perceiving several persons making towards the sea, I inquired whither they were going, and was told they were about to embark for the Holy Land to celebrate at Jerusalem the feast of the Exaltation of the glorious Cross of our Saviour. I embarked with them, looking only for fresh opportunities to continue my debauches, which I repeated both during my voyage and after my arrival at Jerusalem. On the day appointed for the festival, all going to church, I mixed with the crowd to get into the church where the holy cross was shown and exposed to the veneration of the faithful; but found myself withheld from entering the place by some secret but invisible force. This happening to me three or four times, I retired into a corner of the court and began to consider with myself what this might proceed from; and seriously reflecting that my criminal life might be the cause, I melted into tears. Beating therefore my sinful breast, with sighs and groans, I perceived above me the picture of the mother of God. Fixing my eyes upon it, I addressed myself to that holy virgin, begging of her by her incomparable purity to succour me, defiled with such a load of abominations, and to render my repentance the more acceptable to God. I besought her I might be suffered to enter the church doors to behold the sacred wood of my redemption; promising from that moment to consecrate myself to God by a life of penance, taking her for my surety in this change of my heart. After this ardent prayer I perceived in my soul a secret consolation under my grief; and attempting again to enter the church, I went up with ease into the very middle of it and had the comfort to venerate the precious wood of the glorious cross which brings life to man. Considering, therefore, the

incomprehensible mercy of God and his readiness to receive sinners to repentance, I cast myself on the ground, and after having kissed the pavement with tears, I arose and went to the picture of the mother of God, whom I had made the witness and surety of my engagements and resolutions. Falling there on my knees before her image I addressed my prayers to her, begging her intercession and that she would be my guide. After my prayer I seemed to hear this voice: 'If thou goest beyond the Jordan, thou shalt there find rest and comfort.' Then, weeping and looking on the image, I begged of the holy queen of the world that she would never abandon me. After these words I went out in haste, bought three loaves, and asking the baker which was the gate of the city which led to the Jordan, I immediately took that road and walked all the rest of the day, and at night arrived at the church of St John Baptist on the banks of the river. There I paid my devotions to God and received the precious body of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Having ate the half of one of the loaves, I slept all night on the ground. Next morning, recommending myself to the Holy Virgin, I passed the Jordan and from that time I have carefully shunned the meeting of any human creature."

Zosimus asked how long she had lived in that desert. "It is," said she, "as near as I can judge, forty-seven years." "And what have you subsisted upon all that time?" replied Zosimus. "The loaves I took with me," answered she, "lasted me for some time: since that I have had no other food but what this wild and uncultivated solitude afforded me. My clothes being worn out, I suffered severely from the heat and the cold, with which I was often so afflicted that I was not able to stand." "And have you passed so many years," said the holy man, "without suffering much in your soul?" She answered, "Your question makes me tremble, by the very remembrance of my past dangers and conflicts, through the perverseness of my heart. Seventeen years I passed in most violent temptations and almost perpetual conflicts with my inordinate desires. I was tempted to regret the flesh and fish of Egypt, and the wines which I drank in the world to excess; whereas here I often could not come at a drop of water to quench my thirst. Other desires made assaults on my mind, but, weeping and striking my breast on those occasions, I called to mind the vows I had made under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, and begged her to obtain my deliverance from the affliction and danger of such thoughts. After long weeping and bruising my body with blows, I found myself suddenly enlightened and my mind restored to a perfect calm." Zosimus taking notice that in her discourse with him she from time to time made use of scripture phrases, asked her if she had ever applied herself to the study of the sacred books. Her answer was that she could not even read, neither had she conversed nor seen any human creature since she came into the desert till that day, that

could teach her to read the holy scripture or read it to her; "but it is God," said she, "that teacheth man knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Thus have I given you a full account of myself; keep what I have told you as an inviolable secret during my life and allow me, the most miserable of sinners, a share in your prayers." She concluded with desiring him not to pass over the Jordan next Lent, according to the custom of his monastery, but to bring with him on Maunday Thursday the body and blood of our Lord and wait for her on the banks of the river on the side which is inhabited. Having spoken thus, and once more entreating him to pray for her, she left him. Zosimus hereupon fell on his knees, thanked God for what he had seen and heard, kissed the ground whereon she had stood and returned by the usual time to his monastery.

The year following, on the first Sunday in Lent, he was detained at home on account of sickness, as indeed she had foretold him. On Maunday Thursday, taking the sacred body and blood of our Lord in a small chalice, and also a little basket of figs, dates, and lentils, he went to the banks of the Jordan. At night she appeared on the other side and, making the sign of the cross over the river, she went forward, walking upon the surface of the water as if it had been dry land till she reached the opposite shore. Being now together, she craved his blessing and desired him to recite the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. After which she received from his hands the holy sacrament. Then lifting up her hands to heaven, she said aloud with tears, "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen my Saviour." She begged Zosimus to pardon the trouble she had given him, and desired him to return the following Lent to the place where he first saw her. He begged of her on his side to accept the sustenance he had brought her. But she took only a few of the lentils and, conjuring him never to forget her miseries, left him, and then went over the river as she came. Zosimus returned home, and at the very time fixed by the saint set out in quest of her with the view of being still further edified by her holy conversation, and of learning also her name which he had forgot to ask. But on his arrival at the place where he had first seen her he found her corpse stretched out on the ground, with an inscription declaring her name Mary and the time of her death. Zosimus being miraculously assisted by a lion, dug a grave and buried her. And having recommended himself and the whole church to the saint's intercession, he returned to his monastery, where he recounted all that he had seen and heard of this holy penitent, and continued there to serve God till his happy death, which happened in the hundredth year of his age; and it is from a relation of the monks of that community that an author of the same century wrote her life as above related; which history is mentioned soon after by many

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxix. 10.

authors, both of the Eastern and Western Church. Papebroke places her conversion in 383 and her death in 421.

In the example of this holy woman we admire the wonderful goodness and mercy of God, who raised her from the sink of the most criminal habits and the most abandoned state to the most sublime and heroic virtue. Whilst we consider her severe penance, let us blush at the manner in which we pretend to do penance. Let her example rouse our sloth. The kingdom of heaven is only for those who do violence to themselves. Let us tremble with her at the remembrance of our baseness and sins as often as we enter the sanctuary of the Lord or venerate his holy cross, the instrument of our redemption. We insult him when we pretend exteriorly to pay him our homages and at the same time dishonour him by our sloth and sinful life. God, by the miraculous visible repulse of this sinner, shows us what he does invisibly with regard to all obstinate and wilful sinners. We join the crowd of adorers at the foot of his altar; but he abhors our treacherous kisses like those of Judas. We honour his cross with our lips; but he sees our heart and condemns its irregularities and its opposition to his holy spirit of perfect humility, meekness, self-denial, and charity. Shall we then so much fear to provoke his indignation by our unworthiness as to keep at a distance from his holy places or mysteries? By no means. This would be irrecoverably to perish by cutting off the most essential means of salvation. Invited by the infinite goodness and mercy of God, and pressed by our own necessities and dangers the more grievous these are, with so much greater earnestness and assiduity must we sue for pardon and grace, provided we do this in the most profound sentiments of compunction, fear, and confidence.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 9 :*

ST DORTO, founded and governed a great monastery in the sixth century on one of the isles of Orkney. He lived to be one hundred years old : ST EUPSYCHIUS, martyr, of noble birth and but recently married when he was called on to declare his faith, under Julian the Apostate : ST GAUCHER, Abbot in Limousin : ST MARY OF EGYPT : THE MASSYLITAN MARTYRS, in Africa, famous in ancient calendars ; St Augustine preached a sermon on their festivals : THE ROMAN CAPTIVES IN PERSIA, martyred in the year 362 (of Sapor, the year 53). Three hundred of these had the option of adoring the sun or dying ; twenty-five complied to save their lives, the remaining 275, with Dausas, a bishop, remained constant to the end : ST WALTRUDE, widow : and ST ZOSIMUS.

APRIL 10

ST BADEMUS, ABBOT, MARTYR

(A.D. 376)

[From his original Syriac acts, written by St Maruthas, published by Assemani, t. i. p. 165. The Greek from Metaphrastes were given us by Henschenius, p. 828, and Ruinart, p. 680.]

BADEMUS was a rich and noble citizen of Bethlapeta, in Persia, who, desiring to devote himself to the service of God out of his estates, founded

a monastery near that city, which he governed with great sanctity. The purity of his soul had never been sullied by any crime, and the sweet odour of his sanctity diffused a love of virtue in the hearts of those that approached him. He watched whole nights in prayer, and passed sometimes several days together without eating; bread and water were his usual fare. He conducted his religious in the paths of perfection with sweetness, prudence, and charity. In this amiable retreat he enjoyed a calmness and happiness which the great men of the world would view with envy did they compare with it the unquiet scenes of vice and vanity in which they live. But, to crown his virtue, God permitted him, with seven of his monks, to be apprehended by the pursuivants of King Sapor in the thirty-sixth year of his persecution. He lay four months in a dungeon loaded with chains, during which lingering martyrdom he was every day called out to receive a certain number of stripes. But he triumphed over his torments by the patience and joy with which he suffered them for Christ. At the same time a Christian lord of the Persian court named Nersan, prince of Aria, was cast into prison because he refused to adore the sun. At first he showed some resolution; but at the sight of tortures his constancy failed him and he promised to conform. The king, to try if his change was sincere, ordered Bademus to be brought to Lapeta, with his chains struck off, and to be introduced into the prison of Nersan, which was a chamber in the royal palace. Then his majesty sent word to Nersan by two lords that if, with his own hand, he would despatch Bademus, he should be restored to his liberty and former dignities. The wretch accepted the condition; a sword was put into his hand and he advanced to plunge it into the breast of the abbot. But being seized with a sudden terror, he stopped short and remained some time without being able to lift up his arm to strike. The servant of Christ stood undaunted, and with his eyes fixed upon him said, "Unhappy Nersan, to what a pitch of impiety do you carry your apostasy! With joy I run to meet death; but could wish to fall by some other hand than yours: why must you be my executioner?" Nersan had neither courage to repent nor heart to accomplish his crime. He strove, however, to harden himself, and continued with a trembling hand to aim at the sides of the martyr. Fear, shame, remorse, and respect for the martyr, whose virtue he wanted courage to imitate, made his strokes forceless and unsteady; and so great was the number of the martyr's wounds that they stood in admiration at his invincible patience. At the same time they detested the cruelty and despised the base cowardice of the murderer, who at last, aiming at his neck, after four strokes severed his head from the trunk. Neither did he escape the divine vengeance: for a short time after, falling into public disgrace, he perished by the sword after tortures, and under the maledictions of the people. Such is the treachery of the

world towards those who have sacrificed their all in courting it. Though again and again deceived by it, they still listen to its false promises and continue to serve this hard master till their fall becomes irretrievable. The body of St Bademus was reproachfully cast out of the city by the infidels, but was secretly carried away and interred by the Christians. His disciples were released from their chains four years afterwards, upon the death of King Sapor. St Bademus suffered on the 10th of the moon of April in the year 376, of King Sapor the sixty-seventh.

Monks were called Mourners by the Syrians and Persians, because by their state they devoted themselves in a particular manner to the most perfect exercises of compunction and penance, which indeed are an indispensable duty of every Christian. The name of angels was often given them over all the East, during several ages,<sup>1</sup> because by making heavenly contemplation and the singing of the divine praises their great and glorious employment, if they duly acquit themselves of it, they may be justly called the seraphim of the earth. The soul which loves God is made a heaven which he inhabits, and in which she converses with him in the midst of her own substance. Though he is infinite and the highest heavenly spirits tremble before him, and how poor and base soever we are, he invites us to converse with him, and declares that it is his delight to be with us. Shall not we look upon it as our greatest happiness and comfort to be with Him and to enjoy the unspeakable sweetness of his presence. Oh! what ravishing delights does a soul taste which is accustomed, by a familiar habit, to converse in the heaven of her own interior with the three persons of the adorable Trinity! Dissipated worldlings wonder how holy solitaries can pass their whole time buried in the most profound solitude and silence of creatures. But those who have had any experience of this happiness are surprised, with far greater reason, how it is possible that any souls which are created to converse eternally with God should here live in constant dissipation, seldom entertaining a devout thought of Him whose charms and sweet conversation eternally ravish all the blessed.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 10 :*

ST BADEMUS, Abbot and martyr: BLESSED MECHTILDES, Abbess, a sister of St Gertrude. They were Countesses of Hackuborn and cousins of the Emperor Frederick II. She lived always a stranger to the vanities of the world and tried to conceal her virtues as industriously as others do their sins. She banished worldly news and discourse from her community and foresaw her own death.

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<sup>1</sup> See Du Cange's Glossary of the Greek Language for the middle ages.

APRIL 11

## ST LEO THE GREAT, POPE

(A.D. 461)

[From the councils, t. iv., this pope's works in the late Roman edition, and the historians of that age. See Tillemont, t. xv. p. 141, and Ceillier, t. xiv. p. 316, who chiefly follow Quesnel's collection of memoirs for his life, Op. t. ii. Diss. i, which must be compared with, and often corrected by, the remarks of F. Cacciari, in his Exercitationes in Opera S. Leonis, especially in those De Hæresi Pelagianâ et De Hæresi Eutylianâ.]

ST LEO, surnamed the Great, was descended of a noble Tuscan family, but born at Rome as he himself and St Prosper assures us.<sup>1</sup> The quickness of his parts and the maturity of his judgment appeared in the rapid progress which he made in his studies. Having rendered himself a great master in the different branches of polite literature, especially eloquence, he turned his thoughts entirely to the study of the holy scriptures and theology, to which he made the profane sciences only subservient. "God, who destined him to gain great victories over error and to subject human wisdom to the true faith, had put into his hands the arms of science and truth," as an ancient general council says.<sup>2</sup> Being made archdeacon of the church of Rome, he had the chief direction of the most important affairs under Pope Celestine, as appears from St Prosper, a letter of St Cyril to him, and Cassian's book against Nestorius. To his penetration and zeal it was owing afterwards that Sixtus III discovered the dissimulation of Julian the Pelagian and rejected his false repentance. It happened that Aetius and Albinus, two generals of the Emperor Valentinian III, were at variance in Gaul; and no one being so well qualified to compose their differences as the eloquent and virtuous Archdeacon Leo, he was sent upon that important commission. During his absence Sixtus III died in 440, and the Roman clergy cast their eyes upon him for their pastor, judging that he, who for sanctity, learning, prudence, and eloquence was the first man of his age, was the most worthy and fit to be seated in the first chair of the church. The qualifications and virtues which we admire when found single in others were all united in him to a very great degree. This justly raised throughout the Christian world the highest expectations from his administration; which yet his great actions far surpassed. He was invited to Rome by a public embassy and expected with impatience; but it was forty days before he could arrive. The joy with which he was received is not to be expressed, and he received the episcopal consecration on Sunday the 29th of September in 440. We learn from himself what were his sentiments at the news of his exaltation. He considered a high dignity as a place where falls are most frequent and always most dangerous; and he cried out,<sup>3</sup> "Lord, I have heard your voice

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 27, ad Pulcher. c. 4.<sup>2</sup> Conc. t. iv. p. 820.<sup>3</sup> Serm. 2, de Assumpt. suâ. c. 1, p. 4, t. i. ed. Rom.



calling me, and I was afraid: I considered the work which was enjoined me, and I trembled. For what proportion is there between the burden assigned to me and my weakness, this elevation and my nothingness? What is more to be feared than exaltation without merit, the exercise of the most holy functions being intrusted to one who is buried in sin? O you who have laid upon me this heavy burden, bear it with me, I beseech you: be you my guide and my support: give me strength, you who have called me to the work; who have laid this heavy burden on my shoulders."

A heart thus empty of itself could not fail to be supported and directed by the divine grace. He was called to the government of the church in the most difficult times, and he diligently applied himself without delay to cultivate the great field committed to his care, and especially to pluck up the weeds of errors and to root out the thorns of vices wherever they appeared. He never intermitted to preach to his people with great zeal; which he often mentions as the most indispensable duty of pastors, and the constant practice of his predecessors.<sup>1</sup> A hundred and one sermons, preached by this pope on the principal festivals of the year, are now extant. He often inculcates in them the practice of holy fasting and alms-deeds, as good works which ought to be joined and support each other. We have among his works nine sermons on the fast of the tenth month, or of Ember-days in December. He says the church has instituted the Ember-days in the four seasons of the year to sanctify each season by a fast:<sup>2</sup> also to pay to God a tribute of thanksgiving for the fruits and other blessings which we continually receive from his bounty:<sup>3</sup> and to arm us constantly against the devil. He sets forth the obligation of alms, which is so great that for this alone God gives riches, and not to be hoarded up or lavished in superfluities: and at the last day he seems in his sentence chiefly to recompense this virtue and to punish the neglect of it, to show us how much alms-deeds are the key of heaven and of all other graces.<sup>4</sup> He says this obligation binds all persons, though it is not to be measured by what a man has, but by the heart; for all men are bound to have the same benevolence and desire of relieving others.<sup>5</sup> That the rich are obliged to seek out the bashful poor, who are to be assisted without being put to the blush in receiving.<sup>6</sup> He shows the institution of Collects or gatherings for the poor to be derived from the apostles, and ever to have been continued in the church for the relief of the indigent.<sup>7</sup> He surpasses himself in sentiment and eloquence whenever he speaks of the sweetness of the divine love which is displayed to us in the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. His one hundred and forty-one epistles are wholly employed in treating on important subjects of discipline and faith, and

<sup>1</sup> Sermon. 3, 7, 11.<sup>2</sup> Sermon. 18.<sup>3</sup> Sermon. 12.<sup>4</sup> Sermon. 8, c. 3, p. 17; and Sermon. 9, c. 3, p. 20; Sermon. 10, c. 1, p. 21.<sup>5</sup> Sermon. 7, item. 5 and 6, 16, 39, &c.<sup>6</sup> Sermon. 8, p. 17.<sup>7</sup> Sermon. 10, p. 21.

alone suffice to show his pastoral vigilance and immense labours in every part of the Christian world for the advancement of piety. He brought many infidels to the faith, and took great delight in instructing them himself. His signal victories over the Manichees, Arians, Apollinarists, Nestorians, Eutychians, Novatians, and Donatists are standing proofs of his zeal for the purity of the faith. Carthage being taken by the Vandals in 439, a great number of Manichees fled out of Africa to Rome: but there, to escape the rigour of the imperial laws against their sect, feigned themselves Catholics. They called wine the gall of the dragon, produced by the devil or their evil god: on which account they always refrained from that liquor, which they regarded, as of its own nature, unclean. To conceal themselves they received the holy communion from the catholic priests, but under one kind alone, which it was left to every one's discretion then to do. This affectation of the heretics passed some time unobserved, as we learn from St Leo,<sup>1</sup> in the year 433. But he no sooner discovered this sacrilegious abuse than he took the utmost care to prevent the contagion from infecting his flock. He detected several of these heretics, and among them one whom they called their bishop, and to manifest the impiety of this sect he assembled several bishops and priests and the most illustrious persons of the senate and empire, and caused the elect of the Manichees, that is, those that were initiated in their mysteries, to be introduced.<sup>2</sup> They confessed publicly many impious tenets, superstitions, and a crime which modesty forbids to be named.<sup>3</sup> St Prosper says their books were burnt; but many of them repented and abjured their heresy. St Leo, in receiving them into the church, exhorted his people to pray and sigh with him for them.<sup>4</sup> Those that remained obstinate were banished. St Leo about the same time crushed Pelagianism, which began again to show its head about Aquileia.<sup>5</sup> His watchfulness put a stop to the growing evil, both in those parts and in Rome itself, where St Prosper detected some remains of the same leaven. For this pope, who was a true judge of merit and drew many learned men about his person, had chosen St Prosper of Aquitain his secretary to write his letters and dispatch the like business. The Priscillianist heretics reigned almost uncontrolled in Spain: only St Turibus, Bishop of Astorga, zealously opposed them. St Leo wrote to commend his zeal, and to awake the attention of the other bishops of that country, whom he ordered to convene a council for the extirpation of the spreading cancer.<sup>6</sup> He examined the cause of Chelidonius, Bishop of Besançon, déposed by St Hilary of Arles, and restored him to his see.<sup>7</sup> The learned De Marca thinks that St Leo did not deny the jurisdiction of Hilary over Besançon before that

<sup>1</sup> Serm. 4, de Quadrag. t. i. p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 8, p. 33; and Ep. 15, c. 16, p. 71, t. i.; Serm. 15, p. 31, t. i.; Serm. 33, p. 87; Serm. 41, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 15, ad Turib. p. 62; Serm. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Serm. 33; Ep. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ep. 9, 10.

time, but he judged Chelidonius not to have been guilty of that which had been laid to his charge, adding, "that the sentence would have stood firm if the things objected had been true." He was very careful in the choice of persons whom he promoted to holy orders, as his writings show; yet the author of the *Spiritual Meadow* relates that he heard Amos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, say to several abbots: "Pray for me. The dreadful weight of the priesthood affrights me beyond measure, especially the charge of conferring orders. I have found it written that the blessed Pope Leo, equal to the angels, watched and prayed forty days at the tomb of St Peter, begging through the intercession of that apostle to obtain of God the pardon of his sins. After this term, St Peter, in a vision, said to him, 'Your sins are forgiven you by God, except those committed by you in conferring holy orders: of these you still remain charged to give a rigorous account.'"<sup>1</sup> St Leo, with regard to those who are to be ordained ministers of the altar, lays down this rule, inserted in his words into the body of the canon law: "What is it not to lay hands upon any one suddenly, according to the precept of the apostle, but not to raise to the honour of the priesthood any who have not been thoroughly tried, or before a mature age, a competent time of trial, the merit of labour in the service of the church, and sufficient proofs given of their submission to rule, and their love of discipline and zeal for its observance."<sup>2</sup>

Many affairs in the churches of the East furnished this great pope with much employment, as the intrusion of Bassian into the see of Ephesus,<sup>3</sup> &c. But above all the rest the rising heresy of Eutyches drew his attention on that side of the world. This heresiarch had been condemned by St Flavian in 448; yet, by the intrigues of Chrysaphius, a powerful eunuch, he prevailed with the weak Emperor Theodosius II to assemble a packed council at Ephesus, in which Dioscorus, the wicked Patriarch of Alexandria, an Eutychian and general disturber of Christian peace, took upon him to preside. This pretended synod, commonly called the *Latrocinale*, or cabal of Ephesus, met on the 8th of August 449, acquitted Eutyches, and condemned St Flavian with a degree of malice and violence unheard of among barbarians. The legates of Leo, who were Julius, Bishop of Puozzoli, the ancient Puteoli; Renatus, a priest; Hilarius, a deacon; and Dulcitius, a notary, refused to subscribe to the unjust sentence, and opposed it with a zeal and vigour that was admired by the whole world, says Theodoret.<sup>4</sup> Upon the first advice of these proceedings, St Leo declared them null and void,<sup>5</sup> and at the same time he wrote to St Flavian to encourage him; and to the emperor himself, telling him that no

<sup>1</sup> Prat. Spir. c. 149.

<sup>2</sup> St Leo, Ep. 1, t. ii. p. 2, ed. Rom. Item *Distinct.* 78, 3. *Quid est manus*, from 1 Tim. v. 22

<sup>3</sup> Conc. t. iv. p. 687.

<sup>4</sup> Theodoret, Ep. 116.

<sup>5</sup> Conc. t. iv. p. 47; and St Leo, Ep. 49 and 56; ed. Quesn. 50 and 57. ed. Rom.

sacrilegious cabal ever came up to the fury of this assembly,<sup>1</sup> and conjuring him in these words: "Leave to the bishops the liberty of defending the faith: no powers or terrors of the world will ever be able to destroy it. Protect the church and seek to preserve its peace, that Christ may protect your empire." He adds that he trembles to see him draw down the divine vengeance upon his own head: which had the appearance of a prediction, on account of the various misfortunes which befel that prince, and his sudden death: though before the latter event his eyes began to be opened. Marcian and St Pulcheria, succeeding in the empire, vigorously supported the zealous endeavours of the pope. By his authority the General Council of Chalcedon, consisting of six hundred or six hundred and thirty bishops, was opened on the 8th of October in 451. St Leo presided by his legates, Paschasinus, Bishop of Lilybæum; Lucentius, Bishop of Ascoli; and Boniface, priest of Rome. In this synod the memory of St Flavian was vindicated, and Dioscorus was convicted of having maliciously suppressed the letters of St Leo in the Latrocinale of Ephesus, and of having presumed to excommunicate St Leo, which attempt was made the principal cause of his deposition; for which, besides other crimes, it was also urged against him that he had pretended to hold a general council without the authority of the pope, a thing never lawful and never done, as was observed by the pope's legates.<sup>2</sup> For these crimes and excesses he was by the pope's legates and the whole council declared excommunicated and deposed.<sup>3</sup> St Leo had wrote to St Flavian on the 13th of June in 449 a long and accurate doctrinal letter, in which he clearly expounded the catholic faith concerning the mystery of the incarnation, against the errors both of Nestorius and Eutyches. This excellent letter had been suppressed by Dioscorus, but was read by the legates at Chalcedon and declared by the voice of that general council to be dictated by the Holy Ghost, and to be a rule throughout the universal church. The great Theodoret having read it, blessed God for having preserved his holy faith.<sup>4</sup> St Leo approved all things that had been done in this council relating to definitions of faith; but, being an enemy to innovations, vigorously opposed the twenty-eighth canon, framed in the absence of his legates, by which the Archbishop of Constantinople was declared a patriarch and the first among the patriarchs of the East.<sup>5</sup> However, the eastern bishops, who usually found access to the emperor through the Bishop of Constantinople, allowed him that pre-eminence, which the law of custom confirmed.<sup>6</sup> The same council declared the

<sup>1</sup> St Leo, Ep. 42, in ed. Quesn. 43, in ed. Rom. p. 187, t. ii.; St Leo ad Theodos. Imp. Ep. 40 ed. Quesn. 41, ed. Rom. p. 178; Ep. ad Pulcheriam Augustam, Ep. 41; ed. Quesn. 42, ed. Rom. p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> See Marcade Concordia, Sac. et Imperii, lib. v. c. 5, and Cacciari, Exercitat. in Op. S. Leonis Dissert. de Hæresi Eutychianâ.

<sup>3</sup> Conc. t. iv. p. 424.

<sup>4</sup> Theodoret, Ep. 121.

<sup>5</sup> St Leo, Ep. 87, 92.

<sup>6</sup> See Thomassin, Discipline de l'Eglise, lib. i. c. 6.

Bishop of Jerusalem independent of Antioch and Primate of the three Palestines.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the Eastern empire was thus distracted by heretical factions, the Western was harassed by barbarians. Attila, the Hun, enriched with the plunder of many nations and cities, marched against Rome. In the general consternation, Saint Leo, at the request of the whole city of Rome, went to meet Attila, in hopes of mollifying his rage and averting the danger that threatened his country. Avienus, a man of consular dignity, and Trygetius, who had been prefect of the city, were deputed to accompany him in this embassy. They found the haughty tyrant at Ambuleium, near Ravenna, where the highway passes the river Menzo. Contrary to the expectation of everyone, he received the pope with great honour, gave him a favourable audience, and, through his suggestion, concluded a treaty of peace with the empire on the condition of an annual tribute. Baronius, from a writer of the eighth century, relates that Attila saw two venerable personages, supposed to be the apostles SS Peter and Paul, standing on the side of the pope whilst he spoke. The king immediately commanded his army to forbear all hostilities, and soon after repassed the Alps and retired beyond the Danube into Pannonia, but in his way home was seized with a violent vomiting of blood, of which he died in 453. Divisions among his children and princes destroyed the empire of the Huns.<sup>2</sup> Thus fell the most haughty and furious of all the barbarian heathen kings, styled the Terror of the World, and the Scourge of God, whose instrument he was in punishing the sins of Christians. It was the glory of St Leo to have checked his fury and protected Rome when it was in no condition of defence. In 455 the friends of Aëtius (whose greatness and arrogance had given the emperor so much umbrage that he caused him to be assassinated) revenged the death of that general by the murder of Valentinian himself. His wife, Eudoxia married by compulsion the tyrant Maximus who had usurped his throne; but, not brooking these affronts, she invited Genseric, the Arian Vandal king, from Africa, to come and revenge the murder of her husband. Maximus fled, but was slain by Valentinian's servants on the 12th of June, in the twenty-seventh day of his reign, in 455. Three days after, Genseric arrived, and found the gates of Rome open to receive him. St Leo went out to meet him, and prevailed with him to restrain his troops from slaughter and burning, and to content himself with the plunder of the city. The example of St Leo shows that, even in the worst of times, a holy pastor is the greatest comfort and support of his flock. After the departure of the Vandals, with their captives and an immense booty, St Leo sent zealous catholic priests and alms for the relief of the captives in Africa. He repaired the Basilics and replaced the rich plate and ornaments of the churches which

<sup>1</sup> Sess. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Jornand. *Rer. Goth.* c. 12, 49; *Prosp. in Chron. ad. an 452.*

had been plundered, though some part had escaped by being concealed, especially what belonged to the churches of SS Peter and Paul, which Baronius thinks Genseric spared and granted to them the privilege of sanctuaries, as was done at other times. This great pope, for his humility, mildness, and charity, was revered and beloved by emperors, princes, and all ranks of people, even infidels and barbarians. He filled the holy see twenty-one years, one month, and thirteen days, dying on the 10th of November 461. His body was interred in the church of St Peter, and afterwards translated to another place, in the same church, on the 11th of April, on which day his name is placed in the Roman calendar. His relics were again translated with great solemnity and devotion, inclosed in a case of lead and placed in the altar dedicated to God under his invocation, in the Vatican church in the year 1715, as is related at length by Pope Benedict XIV.<sup>1</sup> A writer who delights in retailing slander could not refuse this character of St Leo: "He was," says he, "without doubt a man of extraordinary parts, far superior to all who had governed that church before him, and scarce equalled by any since."

The writings of this great pastor are the monuments of his extraordinary genius and piety. His thoughts are true, bright, and strong; and in every sentiment and expression we find a loftiness which raises our admiration. But the dress with which he clothes his thoughts is much less to be considered than the subjects themselves of which he treats, in which the most consummate piety and skill in theology equally raise admiration, instruct and edify his readers in the learned and pious sermons and doctrinal letters which compose his works. His unwearied zeal and unshaken steadiness against vice and error, though armed with all the power of a world leagued with the devils against the truth, procured the church infinite advantages and victories over the reigning novelties of that age; and his writings are an armoury against all succeeding heresies. He fully and clearly explains the whole mystery of the incarnation; he proves, against the Eutychians, that Christ had a true body, because his body is really received in the holy eucharist. He laments, as the greatest of spiritual evils, that at Alexandria, during the violences exercised by the Eutychians, the oblation of the sacrifice and the benediction of chrism had been interrupted. He is very explicit on the supremacy of St Peter and on that of his successors. He often recommends himself to the prayers of the saints reigning in heaven, especially of St Peter, and exhorts others to place great confidence in their powerful intercession. He honours their relics and festivals, and testifies that their churches were adorned with lights. He calls the fast of Lent an apostolical tradition, also that of the Ember-days, Whitsun-eve, &c. He adds that the church retained the fast of Ember-days in December from the Jewish practice before Christ.

<sup>1</sup> De Canoniz. lib. iv. c. 22, § 8, 9, 10, t. iv. pp. 212, 213.

Pope Benedict XIV, in a decree by which he commands St Leo to be honoured with the mass peculiar to doctors, dated in 1744, bestows on him due praises for his eminent learning and sanctity.

According to the observation of this holy doctor, it is a fundamental maxim of our holy religion that the only true and valuable riches consist in that blessed poverty of spirit which Christ teaches us to look upon as the first and main step to all happiness. This is a profound and sincere humility of heart, and a perfect disengagement from all inordinate love of earthly goods. Next to frequent devout communion, the assiduous meditation on the life of Christ is the most powerful means of learning the true spirit of his divine virtues, particularly of that humility of which his whole life was the most astonishing model, and which is the summary of his holy precepts. St Leo, by his tender devotion to our Redeemer and the zeal with which he defended the mystery of his incarnation, was penetrated with his spirit of poverty and humility; from whence sprang that ardent charity, that admirable greatness of soul, and that invincible courage which were so conspicuous in all his actions.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 11 :*

ST AID, Abbot in Ireland and titular saint of a parish church, an old abbey and a number of chapels there : ST ANTIPAS, martyr, called by Christ his faithful witness (Apoc. xi. 13). His tomb at Pergamus is famous for many miracles : THE VENERABLE GEORGE GERVAISE, O.S.B., martyr, 1571-1608 : ST GUTHLAKE, hermit, Patron of the Abbey of Croyland. A nobleman who, in his youth, served in the armies of Ethelred, King of Mercia. He sought admission into a monastery in his twenty-fourth year : ST LEO THE GREAT, Pope : ST MACCAI, Abbot, a disciple of St Patrick; he flourished in the Isle of Bute.

APRIL 12

ST SABAS THE GOTH, MARTYR

(A.D. 372)

[From his authentic acts, contained in a letter written by the Church of Gothia to that of Cappadocia, of which St Basil was then the chief light; and penned, in all appearance, by St Ascholius, Bishop of Thessalonica, at that time subject to the Goths.]

THE faith of Christ erected its trophies not only over the pride and sophistry of the heathen philosophers and the united power of the Roman empire, but also over the kings of barbarous infidel nations; who, though in every other thing the contrast of the Romans and enemies to their name, yet vied with them in the rage with which they sought, by every human stratagem and every invention of cruelty, to depress the cross of Christ: by which the finger of God was more visible in the propagation of his faith. Even among the Goths his name was glorified by the blood of martyrs. Athanaric, King of the Goths, in the year 370, according to St Jerom, raised a violent persecution against the Christians among them. The Greeks commemorate fifty-one martyrs who suffered in that nation. The two most illustrious are SS Nicetus and Sabas. This latter

was by birth a Goth, converted to the faith in his youth, and a faithful imitator of the obedience, mildness, humility, and other virtues of the apostles. He was affable to all men, yet with dignity; a lover of truth, an enemy to all dissimulation or disguise; intrepid, modest, of few words, and a lover of peace, yet zealous and active. To sing the divine praises in the church and to adorn the altars was his great delight. He was so scrupulously chaste that he shunned all conversation with women except what was indispensable. He often spent whole days and nights in prayer, and devoted his whole life to the exercises of penance; flying vainglory, and by words and example inducing others to a love of virtue, he burned with an ardent desire in all things to glorify Jesus Christ. The princes and magistrates of Gothia began, in 370, to persecute the Christians, by compelling them to eat meats which had been sacrificed to idols, out of a superstitious motive, as if they were sanctified. Some heathens who had Christian relations, desiring to save them, prevailed upon the king's officers to present them common meats which had not been offered to the idols. Sabas condemned this impious collusion and not only refused to eat such meats, but protested aloud that whoever should eat them would be no longer a Christian, having by that scandalous compliance renounced his faith. Thus he hindered many from falling into that snare of the devil, but displeased others, who banished him from his town, though they some time after recalled him from home. The next year the persecution was renewed, and a commissary of the king arrived at St Sabas's town in search of Christians. Some of the inhabitants offered to swear on the victims that there were no Christians in the place. Sabas appeared, and stepping up to those who were going to take that oath, said "Let no man swear for me, for I am a Christian." Notwithstanding this, the commissary ordered the oath to be tendered. Therefore the principal men of the city hid the other Christians and then swore there was but one Christian in their town. The commissary commanded that he should appear. Sabas boldly presented himself. The commissary asked the bystanders what wealth he had; and being told he had nothing besides the clothes on his back, the commissary despised him, saying, "Such a fellow can do us neither good nor harm."

The persecution was renewed with much greater fury in 372, before Easter. Sabas considered how he could celebrate that solemnity, and for this purpose set out to go to a priest, named Gouttica, in another city. Being on the road he was admonished by God to return and keep the festival with the priest Sansala. He did so, and on the third night after Atharidus, son of one that enjoyed a petty sovereignty in that country, entered the town, and with an armed troop suddenly broke into the lodgings of Sansala, surprised him asleep, bound him, and threw him on a cart. They pulled Sabas out of bed, without suffering him to put on



his clothes, and dragged him naked as he was over thorns and briers, forcing him along with whips and staves. When it was day, Sabas said to his persecutors, "Have not you dragged me quite naked over rough and thorny grounds? Observe whether my feet are wounded, or whether the blows you gave me have made any impression on my body"; and indeed they could not perceive any the least marks. The persecutors being enraged, for want of a rack took the axletree of a cart, laid it upon his neck, and stretching out his hands, fastened them to each end. They fastened another in like manner to his feet, and in this situation they tormented him a considerable part of the following night. When they were gone to rest, the woman of the house in which they lodged untied him; but he would not make his escape and spent the remainder of that night in helping the woman to dress victuals for the family. The next day Atharidus commanded his hands to be tied and caused him to be hung upon a beam of the house, and soon after ordered his servants to carry him and the priest certain meats that had been offered to idols, which they refused to eat, and Sabas said, "This pernicious meat is impure and profane, as is Atharidus himself who sent it." One of the slaves of Atharidus, incensed at these words, struck the point of his javelin against the saint's breast with such violence that all present believed he had been killed. But St Sabas said, "Do you think you have slain me? Know that I felt no more pain than if the javelin had been a lock of wool." Atharidus, being informed of these particulars, gave orders that he should be put to death. Wherefore, having dismissed the priest Sansala, his companion, they carried away St Sabas in order to throw him into the Musæus. The martyr, filled with joy in the Holy Ghost, blessed and praised God without ceasing for thinking him worthy to suffer for his sake. Being come to the river-side, the officers said one to another, "Why don't we let this man go? He is innocent; and Atharidus will never know anything of the matter." St Sabas, overhearing them, asked them why they trifled and were so dilatory in obeying their orders. "I see," said he, "what you cannot: I see persons on the other side of the river ready to receive my soul and conduct it to the seat of glory; they only wait the moment in which it will leave my body." Hereupon they threw him into the river, praising God to the last; and by the means of the axletree they had fastened about his neck, they strangled him in the water. He therefore suffered martyrdom, say the acts, by water and wood, the symbols of baptism and the cross; which happened on the 12th of April, Valentinian and Valens being emperors, in 372. After this the executioners drew his body out of the water and left it unburied; but the Christians of the place guarded it from birds and beasts of prey. Junius Soranus, Duke of Scythia, a man who feared God, carried off the body, which he sent into his own country, Cappadocia. With these relics was sent a letter

from the church of Gothia to that of Cappadocia, which contains an account of the martyrdom of St Sabas, and concludes thus: "Wherefore, offering up the holy sacrifice on the day whereon the martyr was crowned, impart this to our brethren, that the Lord may be praised throughout the Catholic and Apostolic Church for thus glorifying his servants." Thus the acts, which were sent to the church of Cappadocia, together with the relics of St Sabas. Both the Greek and Latin Martyrologies mention this martyr.

The martyrs despised torments and death, because the immense joys of heaven were always before their eyes. If they made a due impression upon our souls, we should never be slothful in the practice of virtue. When an ancient monk complained of being weary of living in close solitude, his abbot said to him, "This weariness clearly proves that you have neither the joys of heaven nor the eternal torments of the damned before your eyes; otherwise, no sloth or discouragement could ever seize your soul." St Austin gives the following advice: "Not only think of the road through which thou art travelling, but take care never to lose sight of the blessed country in which thou art shortly to arrive. Thou meetest here with passing sufferings, but will soon enjoy everlasting rest. In order to labour with constancy and cheerfulness, consider the reward."

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 12 :*

ST JULIUS, chosen Pope, 337 : ST SABAS THE GOTH, martyr : ST VICTOR OF BRAGA, a city watered by the blood of many martyrs during the persecution of Diocletian. Only the names of VICTOR, SYLVESTER, CUCUFAS, SUSANA, and TORQUATUS have reached us. Victor was a catechumen who, refusing to sacrifice to idols, was baptized in his own blood : ST ZENO, Bishop of Verona, styled a martyr by St Gregory the Great, but honoured as a Confessor in the ancient missal of Verona. He is known to have suffered much for the faith and to have worked many miracles.

APRIL 13

ST HERMENEGILD, MARTYR

(A.D. 586)

[From St Gregory the Great, Dial. b. iii. c. 31 ; St Gregory of Tours, Hist. b. v. c. 39, and b. ix. c. 16 ; Mariana, Hist. b. v. c. 12 ; Flores, Espana Sagrada, t. v. c. 2, p. 200 ; Henschenius, t. ii. Apr. p. 134.]

LEVIGILD, or LEOVIGILD, the Goth,<sup>1</sup> King of Spain, had two sons by his first wife Theodosia, namely, Hermenegild and Recared. These he educated in the Arian heresy, which he himself professed, but married Hermenegild, the eldest, to Ingondes, a zealous catholic and daughter to Sigebert, King of Austrasia, in France. The grandees had hitherto disposed of their crown by election, but Levigild, to secure it to his posterity, associated his two sons with him in his sovereignty, and allotted

<sup>1</sup> This name in original Gothic manuscripts is constantly written Liuvigild, as Flores observes. He began his reign in the year of our Lord 568, of the Spanish æra 606, and put St Hermenegild to death in the eighteenth year of his reign, as is clear from an old chronicle published by Flores, Espana Sagrada, t. ii. p. 199.

to each a portion of his dominions. to inure them to government, and Seville fell to the lot of the eldest. Ingondes had much to suffer from Gosvint, a bigoted Arian, whom Levigild had married after the death of Theodosia; but in spite of all her cruel treatment, she adhered strictly to the catholic faith. And such was the force of her example, and of the instructions and exhortations of St Leander, Bishop of Seville, that the prince became a convert; and, taking the opportunity of his father's absence, abjured his heresy and was received into the church by the imposition of hands, and the unction of chrism on the forehead. Levigild, who was already exasperated against his son, upon the first appearance of his change, being now informed of his open profession of the catholic faith, in a transport of rage divested him of the title of king, and resolved to deprive him of his possessions, his princess, and even his life, unless he returned to his former sentiments. Hermenegild, looking upon himself as a sovereign prince, resolved to stand upon his defence, and was supported by all the catholics in Spain; but they were by much too weak to defend him against the Arians. The prince therefore sent St Leander to Constantinople to solicit Tiberius for succours. But he dying soon after and his successor, Maurice, being obliged to employ all his forces to defend his own dominions against the Persians, who had made many irruptions into the imperial territories, no succours were to be obtained. Hermenegild implored next the assistance of the Roman generals, who were with a small army in that part of Spain, on the coast of the Mediterranean, of which the empire of Constantinople still retained possession. They engaged themselves by oath to protect him, and received his wife Ingondes and infant son as hostages; but, being corrupted by Levigild's money, they basely betrayed him. Levigild held his son besieged in Seville above a year, till Hermenegild, no longer able to defend himself in his capital, fled secretly to join the Roman camp; but being informed of their treachery, he went to Cordova and thence to Osseto, a very strong place, in which there was a church held in particular veneration over all Spain. He shut himself up in this fortress with three hundred chosen men; but the place was taken and burnt by Levigild. The prince sought a refuge in a church at the foot of the altar; and the Arian king not presuming to violate that sacred place, permitted his second son, Recared, then an Arian, to go to him and to promise him pardon, in case he submitted himself and asked forgiveness. Hermenegild believed his father sincere, and going out, threw himself at his feet. Levigild embraced him and renewed his fair promises, with a thousand caresses, till he had got him into his own camp. He then ordered him to be stripped of his royal robes, loaded with chains, and conducted prisoner to the tower of Seville in 586, when the saint had reigned two years, as F. Flores proves from one of his coins and other monuments.

There he again employed all manner of threats and promises to draw him back to his heresy, and, hoping to overcome his constancy, caused him to be confined in a most frightful dungeon and treated with all sorts of cruelty. The martyr repeated always what he had before wrote to his father: "I confess your goodness to me has been extreme. I will preserve to my dying breath the respect, duty, and tenderness which I owe you; but is it possible that you should desire me to prefer worldly greatness to my salvation? I value the crown as nothing; I am ready to lose sceptre and life too rather than abandon the divine truth." The prison was to him a school of virtue. He clothed himself in sackcloth and added other voluntary austerities to the hardships of his confinement, and with fervent prayers begged of God to vouchsafe him the strength and assistance which was necessary to support him in his combat for the truth. The solemnity of Easter being come, the perfidious father sent to him an Arian bishop in the night, offering to take him into favour if he received the communion from the hand of that prelate, but Hermenegild rejected the proposal with indignation, reproaching the messenger with the impiety of his sect as if he had been at full liberty. The bishop, returning to the Arian king with this account, the furious father, seeing the faith of his son proof against all his endeavours to pervert him, sent soldiers out of hand to dispatch him. They entered the prison and found the saint fearless and ready to receive the stroke of death, which they instantly inflicted on him, cleaving his head with an axe, whereby his brains were scattered on the floor. St Gregory the Great attributes to the merits of this martyr the conversion of his brother, King Recared, and of the whole kingdom of the Visigoths in Spain. Levigild was stung with remorse for his crime, and though by God's secret but just judgment he was not himself converted, yet on his death-bed he recommended his son, Recared, to St Leander, desiring him to instruct him in the same manner as he had done his brother, Hermenegild, that is, to make him a catholic. This saint received the crown of martyrdom on Easter Eve, the 13th of April. His body remains at Seville. St Gregory of Tours observes that whatever guilt this holy king and martyr incurred by taking up arms against his father, this at least was expiated by his heroic virtue and death.

St Hermenegild began then to be truly a king, says St Gregory the Great, when he became a martyr. From his first conversion to the true faith it was his main study to square his life by the most holy maxims of the gospel. Yet, perhaps, whilst he lived amidst the hurry, flatteries, and pomp of a throne, his virtue was for some time imperfect, and his heart was not perfectly crucified to the world. But humiliations and sufferings for Christ, which the saint bore with the heroic courage, the fidelity, and perfect charity of the martyrs, entirely broke all secret ties of his affections

to the earth and rendered him already a martyr in the disposition of his soul before he attained to that glorious crown. Christ founded all the glory of his humanity, and that of his spiritual kingdom, the salvation of the universe, and all the other great designs of his sacred incarnation, upon the meanness of his poor and abject life, and his ignominious sufferings and death. This same conduct he held in his apostles and all his saints. Their highest exaltation in his grace and glory was built upon their most profound humility and the most perfect crucifixion of their hearts to the world and themselves; the foundation of which was most frequently laid by the greatest exterior as well as interior humiliations. How sweet, how glorious were the advantages of which, by this means, they became possessed even in this life! God making their souls his kingdom, and by his grace and holy charity reigning sovereignly in all their affections. "Thou hast made us a kingdom to our God, and we shall reign," says all pious souls to Christ, penetrated with gratitude for his inexpressible mercy and goodness, with esteem for his grace and love alone, and with a contempt of all earthly things.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 13 :*

ST CARADOC, a Welsh nobleman who, seeing a king's anger, resolved to give his life to the King of kings. He became a priest and then a hermit. Many miracles attested his sanctity. He died in 1124 : ST HERMENEGILD : THE BLESSED JOHN LOCKWOOD, priest, English martyr, 1555-1642 : ST GUINOC, for many years the support of Church and State among the Scots in the ninth century, in the reign of Kenneth II.

APRIL 14

SAINTS TIBURTIUS, VALERIAN, AND MAXIMUS,  
MARTYRS  
(A.D. 229)

[See the acts of St Cecily, and the remarks of Henschenius, ad 14 Aprilis, t. ii. pp. 203, 220.]

THESE holy martyrs have always been held in singular veneration in the church, as appears from the ancient calendar of Fronto, the sacramentary of St Gregory, St Jerom's Martyrology, that of Thomasius, &c. Valerian was espoused to St Cecily and converted by her to the faith; and with her he became the instrument of the conversion of his brother Tibertius. Maximus, the officer appointed to attend their execution, was brought to the faith by the example of their piety and received with them the crown of martyrdom in the year 229. The theatre of their triumph seems to have been Rome, though some have imagined they suffered in Sicily. They were interred in the burying-place of Prætextatus, which from them took the name of Tiburtius. It was contiguous to that of Calixtus. In that place Pope Gregory III repaired their monument in 740; and Adrian I built a church under their patronage. But Pope Paschal trans-

lated the remains of these martyrs, of St Cecily and the Popes SS. Urban and Lucius, into the city, where the celebrated church of St Cecily stands. These relics were found in it in 1599 and visited by the order of Clement VIII, and approved genuine by the Cardinals Baronius and Sfondrate. The Greeks vie with the Latins in their devotion to these martyrs.

Most agreeable to the holy angels was this pious family, converted to God by the zeal and example of St Cecily, who frequently assembled to sing together, with heavenly purity and fervour, the divine praises. We shall also draw upon ourselves the protection, constant favour, and tender attention of the heavenly spirits if we faithfully imitate the same angelical exercise. Mortification, temperance, humility, meekness, purity of mind and body; continual sighs towards heaven; prayer, accompanied with tears and vehement heavenly desires; disengagement of the heart from the world; a pure and assiduous attention to God and to his holy will; and a perfect union by the most sincere fraternal charity—are virtues and exercises infinitely pleasing to them. The angels of peace are infinitely delighted to see the same perfect intelligence and union which makes an essential part of their bliss in heaven reign among us on earth, and that we have all but one heart and one soul. Happy are those holy souls which have renounced the world, in order more perfectly to form in their hearts the spirit of these virtues, in which they cease not, day and night, to attend to the divine praises and consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ, by employing their whole life in this divine exercise. Their profession is a prelude to, or rather a kind of anticipation of, the bliss of heaven. The state of the blessed indeed surpasses it in certain high privileges and advantages. First, They praise God with far greater love and esteem, because they see and know him much more clearly, and as he is in himself. Secondly, They praise him with more joy, because they possess him fully. Thirdly, Their praises have neither end nor interruption. Yet our present state has also its advantages. First, If our praises are mingled with tears, compunction, watchfulness, and conflicts, they merit a continual immense increase of grace, love, and bliss for eternity. Secondly, Our praises cost labour, difficulty, and pain; they are a purgatory of love; those of the blessed the reward and the sovereign bliss. Thirdly, We praise God in a place where he is little loved and little known; we celebrate his glory in an enemy's country, amidst the contradiction of sinners. This obliges us to acquit ourselves of this duty with the utmost fidelity and fervour. A second motive to excite us to assiduity in this exercise is that it associates us already to the angels and saints and makes the earth a paradise: it is also, next to the sacraments, the most powerful means of our sanctification and salvation. With what delight do the holy angels attend and join us in it! With what awe and fervour, with what purity of heart, ardent

love, and profound sentiments of humility, adoration, and all virtues ought we in such holy invisible company to perform this most sacred action! We should go to it penetrated with fear and respect, as if we were admitted into the sanctuary of heaven itself and mingled in its glorious choirs. We ought to behave at it as if we were in paradise, with the utmost modesty, in silence, annihilating ourselves in profound adoration with the seraphim and pronouncing every word with interior sentiment and relish. From prayer we must come as if we were just descended from heaven, with an earnest desire of speedily returning thither, bearing God in our souls, all animated and inflamed by him, and preserving that spirit of devotion with which his presence filled us at prayer.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 14 :*

ST BENEZET, Patron of Avignon, called Little Bennet, a shepherd boy inspired by God to build a bridge across the Rhone at Avignon. He died when this was accomplished, the work having occupied seven years : ST CARPUS, Bishop of Thyatira in Asia Minor, PAPYLAS, his deacon, and AGATHODORUS, his servant, martyrs : SAINTS ANTHONY, JOHN, and EUATACHIUS, martyrs. They were three noblemen of Lithuania, Anthony and John being brothers : ST JUSTIN MARTYR, a converted philosopher and notable writer in the second century : BLESSED LEDWINA, virgin, a lover of pain and poverty, of some of whose miracles Thomas à Kempis was an eye-witness : SAINTS TIBERTIUS, VALERIAN, MAXIMUS and other martyrs, held in great honour in the Church. Valerian was espoused to St Cecily.

APRIL 15

## ST PETER GONZALES, CONFESSOR, COMMONLY CALLED ST TELM, OR ELM, PATRON OF MARINERS

(A.D. 1246)

[From Bzovius ad an. 1246 ; the monuments collected by the Bollandists on the 14th of April, t. ii. p. 389. See F. Touron, *Hommes Illustr.* t. i. p. 49.]

THE best historians place the birth of St Peter Gonzales, in Latin Gonsalvus, in the year 1190 at Astorga, in the kingdom of Leon, in Spain, where he was descended of an illustrious family. His wonderful progress in his studies showed him endowed with an extraordinary quickness of parts, and he embraced an ecclesiastical state, though at that time a stranger to the spirit of disengagement and humility which ought essentially to accompany it. His uncle, the Bishop of Astorga, charmed with his capacity, preferred him to a canonry, and shortly after to the deanery of his chapter. The young dean, free indeed from vice, but full of the spirit of the world, took possession of his dignity with great pomp ; but in the midst of his pride happened, by a false step of his prancing horse, to fall into a sink. This was the moment in which God was pleased to strike his heart. This humiliation made the young gentleman enter into himself, and with remorse to condemn his own vanity and fondness of applause, which deserved a much worse disgrace. Opening his heart to these sentiments of grace, without taking advice from flesh and blood, he retired to Palencia to learn the will of God in solitude, fasting, and

prayer. To fight against pride and self-love, he laboured strenuously to put off the old man by mortification and humility, and became quickly a new man in Christ—recollected, penitent, meek, and humble. The better to secure his victory over the world and himself, he entered the austere Order of St Dominick. The world pursued him into his retreat. Its wise men left no stone unturned to make him return to his dignity; but he was guided by better lights and baffled all their suggestions. Having made his vows and strengthened his soul in the spirit of humility and penance, by the exercises of holy retirement and obedience, he was ordered by his superiors to employ his talents in the ministry of the divine word, to which he consecrated the remainder of his life to the great advantage of innumerable souls. After he had passed the best part of the night in holy meditations, or in singing the praises of God, he spent the whole day in instructing the faithful: his words, always animated with a burning charity and supported by example, produced in his hearers the perfect sentiments with which he endeavoured to inspire them. The greatest libertines melted into tears at his sermons and cast themselves at his feet in a spirit of compunction and penance. The number of conversions which God wrought by his ministry in the kingdom of Leon and Castille, especially in the diocese of Palencia, made King Ferdinand III, though always taken up in his wars with the Saracens, desirous to see him; and so much was he taken with the man of God that he would have him always near his person, both in the court and in the field. He would have him always be present at his discourses, and the holy man, by his prayers and exhortations, reformed the corrupt manners both of the troops and court. His example gave the greatest weight to his words; for he lived in the court as he would have done in a cloister, with the same austerities, the same recollection, the same practices of humility and other virtues. Yet some slaves of pleasure hardened themselves against his zeal, and occasioned him many sufferings. A courtesan was told by some of the nobility that, if she heard Gonzales preach, she would change her life. She impudently answered, "If I had the liberty to speak to him in private, he could no more resist my charms than so many others." The lords, out of a malicious curiosity, promised her a great sum if she could draw him into sin. She went to the saint and, that she might speak to him alone, said she wanted to consult him on a secret affair of importance. When others were gone out she fell on her knees, and shedding forced tears, pretended she desired to change her life, and began to make a sham confession to him of her sins, but had nothing else in view than to ensnare the servant of God, and at last, throwing off all disguise, said all that the devil prompted her in order to seduce him. But her artifices only served to make his triumph the more glorious. Stepping into another room, where there was a fire, and wrapping himself in his cloak, he threw him-



self upon the burning coals, and then called upon her to come and see where he waited for her. She, amazed to see him not burn, cast herself on the ground, confessing her crimes aloud and suddenly became a true penitent, as they did also who had employed her. The saint accompanied Ferdinand, King of Leon and Castille, in all his expeditions against the Moors, particularly in the siege and taking of Cordova in 1236, which, from the year 718, had ever been the chief seat of the Moorish dominions in Spain. Gonzales had a great share in the conquests and temporal advantages of this prince, by his prudent counsels and prayers and by the good order which he prevailed with the officers and soldiers to observe. The conquest of Cordova opened a new field to the zeal of Gonzales. He moderated the ardour of the conquerors; saved the honour of the virgins and the lives of many enemies; and purified the mosques, converting them into churches; in all which he was seconded by King Ferdinand III, surnamed the Saint. The great mosque of Cordova, the most famous of all Spain, became the cathedral church; and whereas the Moors, when they conquered Compostella, two hundred and sixty years before, had carried away the bells and ornaments on the backs of Christians, and placed them in this mosque, King Ferdinand compelled the infidels to carry them back themselves in the same manner to Compostella.

Gonzales burned with so ardent a desire to preach the great truths of our holy religion to the poor and the peasants that no entreaties or solicitations could retain him any longer at court. Galicia and the rest of the coast were the chief theatres of his pious labours the latter years of his life. Neither mountains nor places of the most difficult access in Asturia and other parts, nor the ignorance and brutality of the people, could daunt his courage. Under these fatigues prayer was his refreshment. He appeared everywhere as a new apostle. But the success of his ministry was the most surprising in the diocese of Compostella and Tuy, in which also he wrought many miracles. At Bayona, in Galicia, the number of his auditors having obliged him to preach in a great plain, in the open fields, and a violent storm arising with wind, thunder, and lightning, his whole audience began to be very uneasy and thought to prevent the worst by flying. The holy preacher prevailed upon them to stay and by prayer appeased the tempest. All places round about them were deluged, but not a drop fell upon the auditory. The saint had a particular zeal to instruct the poor in the country, and the sailors, whom he sought in their vessels, and among whom he finished his mortal course. He foretold his death on Palm Sunday, and desiring to die in the arms of his brethren at Compostella, set out from Tuy thither, but growing worse on the road, returned to the former place on foot; so unwilling was he to remit anything in his penitential life. Luke, the famous Bishop of Tuy, his great

admirer and friend, attended him to his last breath; buried him honourably in his cathedral; and in his last will gave directions for his own body to be laid near the remains of this servant of God. They are now exposed to public veneration in the same church, in a magnificent silver shrine, and have been honoured with many miracles. Some place his death on the 15th and others on the 14th of April in 1246. Pope Innocent IV beatified him eight years after, in 1254, and granted an office to his Order in Spain, which was extended to the city of Tuy, though he has not been solemnly canonized. Pope Benedict XIV approved his office for the whole Order of St Dominick. The Spanish and Portuguese mariners invoke his intercession in storms, and by it have often received sensible marks of the divine succour. They call him corruptly St Telm, or Elmo, which Papebroke and Baillet derive originally from St Erasmus, who was implored anciently as a patron by sailors in the Mediterranean.

If we look into the lives of all holy preachers and pastors, especially that of our Divine model, the Prince of pastors and Saint of saints, we shall find that the essential spirit of this state is that of interior recollection and devotion, by which the soul is constantly united to God. This is only learned by an apprenticeship of retirement, and is founded in rooted habits of humility, compunction, and prayer. Great learning is indeed necessary for the discharge of the pastoral duties; but this, and all exterior talents, must be directed and made spiritual by the interior spirit and intention, or they will be pernicious to the pastor, if not also to those whom he ought to direct. It is from true interior charity, zeal, compunction, devotion, and humility that they must derive all their power, and be made instrumental in promoting the divine honour and the sanctification of souls. The pastor must be interiorly filled with the spirit of God and his pure love, that this holy disposition may animate all he says or does exteriorly. To entertain this interior spirit, self-denial, humility, perfect obedience, a contempt of the world, assiduous prayer, and constant recollection must be his perpetual study.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 15 :*

SAINTS BASILISSA and ANASTASIA, two noble women, disciples of Saints Peter and Paul at Rome, beheaded at the order of Nero : ST MUNDE, Abbot : ST PATERNUS, Bishop of Avranches : ST PETER GONZALES, patron of mariners : ST RUADHAN, abbot in Ireland, called one of the twelve apostles of Ireland. He died in 584.

APRIL 16

EIGHTEEN MARTYRS OF SARAGOSSA, AND ST ENCRATIS,  
OR ENGRATIA, VIRGIN, MARTYR

(A.D. 304)

[From Prudentius de Cor. hymn iv. See Vasæus Belga in Chron. Hisp. Breviarium  
Eborensæ a Resendio recognitum, an. 1569.]

ST OPTATUS, and seventeen other holy men,<sup>1</sup> received the crown of martyrdom on the same day at Saragossa, under the cruel governor Dacian, in the persecution of Diocletian in 304. Two others, Caius and Crementius, died of their torments after a second conflict, as Prudentius relates.

The same venerable author describes, in no less elegant verse, the triumphs of St Encratis, or Engratia, virgin. She was a native of Portugal. Her father had promised her in marriage to a man of quality in Rousillon; but, fearing the dangers and despising the vanities of the world, and resolving to preserve her virginity, in order to appear more agreeable to her heavenly spouse and serve him without hindrance, she fled privately to Saragossa, where the persecution was hottest, under the eyes of Dacian. She even reproached him with his barbarities, upon which he ordered her to be long tormented in the most inhuman manner: her sides were torn with iron hooks and one of her breasts was cut off so that the inner parts of her chest were exposed to view and part of her liver pulled out. In this condition she was sent back to prison, being still alive, and died by the mortifying of her wounds in 304. The relics of all these martyrs were found at Saragossa in 1389. Prudentius recommended himself to their intercession, and exhorts the city, through their prayers, to implore the pardon of their sins, with him, that they might follow them to glory.

The martyrs, by a singular happiness and grace, were made perfect holocausts of divine love. Every Christian must offer himself a perpetual sacrifice to God, and by an entire submission to his will, a constant fidelity to his law, and a total consecration of all his affections, devote to him all the faculties of his soul and body, all the motions of his heart, all the actions and moments of his life, and this with the most ardent, unabated love, and the most vehement desire of being altogether his. Can we consider that our most amiable and loving God, after having conferred upon us numberless other benefits, has with infinite love given us himself by becoming man, making himself a bleeding victim for our redemption, and in the holy eucharist remaining always with us, to be our constant sacrifice of adoration and propitiation, and to be our spiritual food, com-

<sup>1</sup> Their names, according to Prudentius, are: Optatus, Lupercus, Martial, Successus, Urban, Quintilian, Julius, Publius, Fronto, Felix, Cecilianus, Evotius, Primitivus, Apodemus, and four others of the name Saturninus.

fort, and strength; lastly, by being the eternal spouse of our souls? Can we, I say, consider that our infinite God has so many ways, out of love, made himself all ours, and not to be transported with admiration and love, and cry out with inexpressible ardour, "My beloved is mine, and I am his?" Yes, I will from this moment dedicate myself entirely to him. Why am not I ready to die of grief and compunction that I ever lived one moment not wholly to him? Oh, my soul! base, mean, sinful, and unworthy as thou art, the return which by thy love and sacrifice thou makest to thy infinite God bears no proportion, and is on innumerable other titles a debt, and thy sovereign exaltation and happiness. It is an effect of his boundless mercy that he accepts thy oblation, and so earnestly sues for it by bidding thee give him thy heart.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 16:*

ST BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE, Confessor: ST DRUON, or Drugo, patron of shepherds: ST FRUCTUOSUS, Archbishop of Braga: ST JOACHIM of Sienna, of the Order of Servites: ST MANS, or Magnus, who gave his life to save the lives of those committed to his care: THE EIGHTEEN MARTYRS OF SARAGOSSA. These were ST OPTATUS and seventeen other holy men who suffered under Dacian. At the same time a heroic virgin, ST ENCRATIS or ENGRATIA, who dared to reproach the tyrant for his cruelty, was killed (304): ST TURIBIUS, Bishop of Astorga, a zealous maintainer of ecclesiastical discipline against the Priscillianist heresy in Spain.

APRIL 17

## ST STEPHEN, CONFESSOR, ABBOT OF CITEAUX

(A.D. 1134)

[From the Exordium of Citeaux: the Annals of that Order by Manriquez; the short ancient life of St Stephen, published by Henriquez in his Fasciculus, printed at Brussels in 1624, and by Henschenius, Apr. 17, t. ii. p. 497; also from the little Exordium of Citeaux, and the Exordium Magnum Cisterc. both in the first tome of Teissier's Bibliotheca Patrum Cisterc. See De Visch's Bibliotheca Cisterciensis, or History of the Writers of this Order, in 4to, printed in 1656; Le Nain, Hist. de l'Ordre de Citeaux, t. i.; Stephens, Monast. Anglic. t. ii.; Brittannia Sancta, and Hist. Littéraire de la France, t. xi. p. 213.]

ST STEPHEN HARDING was an Englishman of an honourable family, and heir to a plentiful estate. He had his education in the monastery of Sherbourne, in Dorsetshire, and there laid a very solid foundation of literature and sincere piety. A cheerfulness in his countenance always showed the inward joy of his soul, and a calm which no passions seemed ever to disturb. Out of a desire of learning more perfectly the means of Christian perfection, he, with one devout companion, travelled into Scotland and afterwards to Paris and to Rome. They every day recited together the whole psalter and passed the rest of their time on the road in strict silence, occupied in holy meditation and private prayer. Stephen, in his return, heard at Lyons of the great austerity and sanctity of the poor Benedictin monastery of Molesme, lately founded by St Robert, in 1075, in the diocese of Langres. Charmed with the perpetual recollection and humility of this house, he made choice of it to accomplish there the sacrifice of himself to God. Such was the extreme poverty of this place

that the monks, for want of bread, were often obliged to live on the wild herbs of the wilderness. The compassion and veneration of the neighbourhood at length supplied their wants in profusion; but with plenty and riches, a spirit of relaxation and self-love crept in and drew many aside from their duty. St Robert, Alberic his prior, and Stephen, seeing the evil too obstinate to admit a cure, left the house; but upon the complaint of the monks, were called back again—Robert, by an order of the pope, the other two by the diocesan. Stephen was then made superior. The monks had promised a reformation of their sloth and irregularities; but their hearts not being changed, they soon relapsed. They would keep more clothes than the rule allowed; did not work so long as it prescribed, and did not prostrate to strangers, nor wash their feet when they came to their house. St Stephen made frequent remonstrances to them on the subject of their remissness. He was sensible that as the public tranquillity and safety of the state depends on the ready observance and strict execution of the laws, so much more do the perfectness and sanctification of a religious state consist in the most scrupulous fidelity in complying with all its rules. Gerson observes how difficult a matter it is to restore the spirit of discipline when it is once decayed, and that, of the two, it is more easy to found a new Order. From whence arises his just remark, how grievous the scandal and crime must be of those who, by their example and tepidity, first open a gap to the least habitual irregularity in a religious Order or house.

Seeing no hopes of a sufficient reformation, St Robert appointed another abbot at Molesme, and with B. Alberic, St Stephen and other fervent monks, they being twenty-one in number, with the permission of Hugh, Archbishop of Lyons, and legate of the holy see, retired to Citeaux, a marshy wilderness five leagues from Dijon. The Viscount of Beaune gave them the ground, and Eudes, afterwards Duke of Burgundy, built them a little church, which was dedicated under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, as all the churches of this Order from that time have been. The monks with their own hands cut down trees and built themselves a monastery of wood, and in it made a new profession of the rule of St Bennet, which they bound themselves to observe in its utmost severity. This solemn act they performed on St Bennet's day, 1098, which is regarded as the date of the foundation of the Cistercian Order. After a year and some months, St Robert was recalled to Molesme, and B. Alberic chosen the second Abbot of Citeaux. These holy men, with their rigorous silence, recollection, and humility, appeared to strangers, by their very countenances, as angels on earth, particularly to two legates of Pope Paschal II, who, paying them a visit, could not be satiated with fixing their eyes on their faces; which, though emaciated with extreme austerities, breathed an amiable peace and inward joy, with an heavenly

air resulting from their assiduous humble conversation with God, by which they seemed transformed into citizens of heaven. Alberic obtained from Paschal II the confirmation of his Order in 1100, and compiled several statutes to enforce the strict observance of the rule of St Bennet, according to the letter. Hugh, Duke of Burgundy, after a reign of three years, becoming a monk at Cluni, resigned his principality to his brother Eudes, who was the founder of Citeaux, and who, charmed with the virtue of these monks, came to live in their neighbourhood, and lies buried in their church with several of his successors. He was great-grandson to Robert, the first Duke of Burgundy, son to Robert, King of France, and brother to King Henry I. The second son of Duke Eudes, named Henry, made his religious profession under B. Alberic, and died holily at Citeaux. B. Alberic finished his course on sackcloth and ashes on the 26th of January 1109, and St Stephen was chosen the third abbot. The Order seemed then in great danger of failing: it was the astonishment of the universe, but had appeared so austere that hitherto scarce any had the courage to embrace that institute. St Stephen, who had been the greatest assistant to his two predecessors in the foundation, carried its rule to the highest perfection, and propagated the Order exceedingly, so as to be regarded as the principal among its founders, as Le Nain observes.

It was his first care to secure, by the best fences, the essential spirit of solitude and poverty. Gold and silver crosses were banished out of the church, and a cross of painted wood and iron candlesticks were made use of; no gold chalices were allowed, but only silver-gilt: the vestments, stoles, and maniples, &c., were made of common cloth and fringes, without gold or silver. The founder would have poverty to reign even in the church, where yet he required the utmost neatness and decency. If riches are to be displayed, this is to be done in the first place to the honour of Him who bestowed them, as God himself was pleased to show in the temple built by King Solomon. Upon this consideration, the monks of Cluni used rich ornaments in the service of the church. But a very contrary spirit moved some of that family afterwards to censure this rule of the Cistercians, which St Bernard justified by his apology. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not.<sup>1</sup> And many saints have thought a neat simplicity and plainness, even in their churches, more suitable to that spirit of extraordinary austerity and poverty which they professed. St Stephen, who was a most learned man, wrote in 1109, being assisted by his fellow-monks, a very correct copy of the Latin Bible. But God was pleased to visit him with trials, that his virtue might be approved when put to the test. The Duke of Burgundy and his court were much offended at being shut out of the monastery, and withdrew their charities and protection; by which means the monks, who were not

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv. 3. 6.

able totally to subsist by their labour in their barren woods and swampy ground, were reduced to extreme want; in which pressing necessity St Stephen went out to beg a little bread from door to door, yet refused to receive any from a simoniacal priest. For though this Order allows not begging abroad, as contrary to its essential retirement, such a case of extreme necessity must be excepted, as Le Nain observes. The saint and his holy monks rejoiced in this their poverty, and in the hardships which they felt under it, but were comforted by frequent sensible marks of the divine protection. This trial was succeeded by another. In the two years 1111 and 1112, sickness swept away the greater part of this small community. St Stephen feared he should leave no successors to inherit, not worldly riches, but his poverty and penance; and many presumed to infer that their institute was too severe and not agreeable to heaven. St Stephen, with many tears, recommended to God his little flock, and after repeated assurances of his protection, had the consolation to receive at once into his community St Bernard, with thirty gentlemen, whose example was followed by many others. St Stephen then founded other monasteries, which he peopled with his monks. Cardinal Guy, Archbishop of Vienne, legate of the holy see in 1117, made a visit to Citeaux, carried St Stephen to his diocese, and founded there, in a valley, the abbey of Bonnevaux. He was afterwards pope, under the name of Calixtus II, and dying in 1124, ordered his heart to be carried to Citeaux and put into the hands of St Stephen. It lies behind the high altar in the old church. St Stephen lived to found himself thirteen abbeys, and to see above a hundred founded by monks of his Order under his direction. In order to maintain strict discipline and perfect charity, he established frequent visitations to be made of every monastery, and instituted general chapters. The annalist of this Order thinks he was the first author of general chapters; nor do we find any mention of them before his time. The assemblies of abbots, sometimes made in the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis le Débonnaire, &c., were kinds of extraordinary synods, not regular chapters. St Stephen held the first general chapter of his Order in 1116; the second in 1119. In this latter he published several statutes, called the Charte of Charity, confirmed the same year by Calixtus II. He caused afterwards a collection of sacred ceremonies and customs to be drawn up, under the name of the Usages of Citeaux, and a short history of the beginning of the Order to be written, called the Exordium of Citeaux. The holy founder made a journey into Flanders in 1125; in which he visited the abbey of St Vast, at Arras, where he was received by the abbot Henry and his community as if he had been an angel from heaven; and the most sacred league of spiritual friendship was made betwixt them, of which several monuments are preserved in the library of Citeaux, described by Mabillon. In 1128, he and St Bernard assisted at the council

of Troyes, being summoned to it by the Bishop of Albano, legate of the apostolic see. In 1132, St Stephen waited on Pope Innocent II, who was come into France. The Bishop of Paris, the Archbishop of Sens, and other prelates besought the mediation of St Stephen with the King of France and with the pope in affairs of the greatest importance. The Cistercian monks came over also into England in the time of St Stephen. The extreme austerity and sanctity of the professors of this Order, which did not admit any relaxation in its discipline for two hundred years after its institution, were a subject of astonishment and edification to the whole world, as is described at large by Oderic Vitalis, St Peter, Abbot of Cluni, William of St Thierry, William of Malmesbury, Peter, Abbot of Celles, Stephen, Bishop of Tournay, Cardinal James of Vitry, Pope Innocent III, &c., who mention with amazement their rigorous silence, their abstinence from flesh-meat, and for the most part from fish, eggs, milk, and cheese; their lying on straw, long watchings from midnight till morning, and austere fasts; their bread as hard as the earth itself; their hard labour in cultivating desert lands to produce the pulse and herbs on which they subsisted; their piety, devotion, and tears in singing the divine office; the cheerfulness of their countenances breathing an holy joy in pale and mortified faces; the poverty of their houses; the lowliness of their buildings, &c.

The saint having assembled the chapter of his Order in 1133, when all the other business was dispatched, alleging his great age, infirmities, and incapacity, begged most earnestly to be discharged from his office of general, that he might in holy solitude have leisure to prepare himself to appear at the judgment seat of Christ. All were afflicted, but durst not oppose his desire. The chapter chose one Guy; but the saint discovering him unworthy of such a charge, in a few days he was deposed, and Raynard, a holy disciple of St Bernard, created general. St Stephen did not long survive the election of Raynard. Twenty neighbouring abbots of his Order assembled at Citeaux to attend at his death. Whilst he was in his agony, he heard many whispering that, after so virtuous and penitential a life, he could have nothing to fear in dying: at this he said to them, trembling, "I assure you that I go to God in fear and trembling. If my baseness should be found to have ever done any good, even in this I fear, lest I should not have preserved that grace with the humility and care I ought." He passed to immortal glory on the 28th of March 1134, and was interred in the tomb of B. Alberic, in which also many of his successors lie buried, in the cloister, near the door of the church. His Order keeps his festival on the 15th of July, as of the first class, with an octave, and with greater solemnity than those of St Robert or St Bernard, having always looked upon him as the principal of its founders. The Roman Martyrology honours him on the 17th of April, supposed



to be the day on which he was canonized, of which mention is made by Benedict XIV.<sup>1</sup>

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 17 :*

ST ANICETUS, Pope in the second age who, if he did not shed his blood for the Faith, purchased the title of martyr by great sufferings and dangers. The thirty-six first Bishops of Rome are honoured amongst the saints: THE VENERABLE HENRY HEATH, O.S.F., English martyr: ST SIMEON, Bishop of Ctesiphon, and his companions, martyrs for the Church in Persia: ST STEPHEN (HARDING), Abbot of Citeaux.

APRIL 18

## ST APOLLONIUS THE APOLOGIST, MARTYR

(A.D. 186)

[From Eusebius, Hist. b. v. c. 21; St Jerom. Cat. c. 42; Tertull. Apol.]

MARCUS AURELIUS had persecuted the Christians from principle, being a bigoted pagan; but his son, Commodus, who in 180 succeeded him in the empire, after some time, though a vicious man, showed himself favourable to them out of regard to Marcia, a lady whom he had honoured with the title of empress, and who was an admirer of the faith. During this calm, the number of the faithful was exceedingly increased, and many persons of the first rank enlisted themselves under the banner of the cross, of which number was Apollonius, a Roman senator. He was a person very well versed both in philosophy and the holy scripture. In the midst of the peace which the church enjoyed, he was publicly accused of Christianity by one of his own slaves, named Severus, before Perennis, prefect of the Prætorium. The slave was immediately condemned by the prefect to have his legs broken and to be put to death, in consequence of an edict of Marcus Aurelius, who, without repealing the former laws against convicted Christians, ordered by it that their accusers should be put to death. The slave being executed, pursuant to the sentence already mentioned, the same judge sent an order to his master, St Apollonius, to renounce his religion as he valued his life and fortune. The saint courageously rejected such ignominious terms of safety, wherefore Perennis referred him to the judgment of the Roman senate, commanding him to give an account of his faith to that body. The martyr hereupon composed an excellent discourse, but which has not reached our times, in vindication of the Christian religion, and spoke it in a full senate. St Jerom, who had perused it, did not know whether more to admire the eloquence or the profound learning, both sacred and profane, of its illustrious author, who, persisting in his refusal to comply with the condition, was condemned by a decree of the senate and beheaded about the year 186, of Commodus VI.

Every Christian ought to be an apologist for his religion by the sanctity of his manners. Such would be the force of universal good example that

<sup>1</sup> De Canoniz. lib. i. c. 13. n. 17, t. i. p. 100.

no libertine or infidel could withstand it. But by the scandal and irregularity of our manners we fight against Christ and draw a reproach upon his most holy religion. Thus, through us, are his name and faith blasphemed among the Gentiles. The primitive Christians converted the world by the sanctity of their example; and by the spirit of every heroic and divine virtue which their actions breathed, spread the good odour of Christ on all sides: but we, by a monstrous inconsistency between our lives and our faith, scandalize the weak among the faithful, strengthen the obstinacy of infidels, and furnish them with arms against that very religion which we profess. "Either change thy faith, or change thy manners," said an ancient father.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 18 :*

ST APOLLONIUS THE APOLOGIST : ST GILDIN, Archbishop of Milan : ST LASERIAN, Bishop of Leighlin, in Ireland (by some called Molaisre) : and BLESSED MARIE DE L'INCARNATION, virgin.

APRIL 19

## ST LEO IX, POPE, CONFESSOR

(A.D. 1054)

[From his councils, and his life, wrote with great accuracy by Wibert his archdeacon, at Toul, published by F. Sirmond at Paris in 1615, by Henschenius, Apr. 19, Mabillon, Act. Ben. t. ix., et Muratori Script. Ital. t. iii. p. 278 ad p. 299 ; another life by the Cardinal of Arragon, who flourished in 1356, apud Muratori, ib. p. 276 ; also from a history of his death by an anonymous contemporary writer, ib., and from the history of the dedication of the Church of St Regimius at Rheims by Anselm, a monk of that house, entitled, Itinerarium Leonis IX in Mabillon, t. viii. See Hist. Littér. Fr. t. vii. p. 458 ; Mabillon, Annal. lib. lix. n. 61, 62 ; Calmet, Hist. de Lorr. t. iv. p. 176.]

THIS great pope received in baptism the name of Bruno. He was born in Alsace in 1002, with his body marked all over with little red crosses, which was attributed to the intense meditation of his pious mother on the passion of Christ. He was of the illustrious house of Dapsbourgh, or Asbourgh, in that province, being the son of Hugh, cousin-german to the mother of the pious Emperor Conrad the Salic. He had his education under Berthold, the virtuous and learned Bishop of Toul; and, after his first studies, was made a canon in that cathedral.<sup>1</sup> His time was principally divided betwixt prayer, pious reading, and his studies; and the hours of recreation he employed in visiting the hospitals and instructing the poor. When he was deacon he was called to the court of the Emperor Conrad, and was much honoured by that prince. The young clergyman displayed an extraordinary talent for business; but never omitted his long exercises of devotion, or his usual fasts and other austere mortifications. In 1026 he was chosen Bishop of Toul. The emperor endeavoured to persuade him to defer his consecration till the year following; but the saint hastened to the care of the church, of which he was to give an account to God, and was consecrated by his metropolitan, the Archbishop of Triers; but

<sup>1</sup> Wibert, in Vita Leonis IX, lib. i. n. 10.

refused to take an unjust and dangerous oath which he exacted of his suffragans, that they would do nothing but by his advice. Bruno began to discharge his pastoral office by the reformation of the clergy and monks, whom he considered as the most illustrious portion of the flock of Christ, and the salt of the earth. By his care the monastic discipline and spirit were revived in the great monasteries of Senones, Jointures, Estival, Bodonminster, Middle-Moutier, and St Mansu or Mansuet. He reformed the manner of celebrating the divine office and performing the church music, in which he took great delight. A soul that truly loves God makes the divine praises the comfort of her present exile. The saint was indefatigable in his labours to advance the service of God and the salvation of souls. Amidst his great actions, it was most admirable to see how little he was in his own eyes. He every day served and washed the feet of several poor persons. His life was an *uninterrupted severe* course of penance, by the practice of secret austerities and a constant spirit of compunction. Patience and meekness were the arms by which he triumphed over envy and resentment, when many strove to bring him into disgrace with the emperor and others. Out of devotion to St Peter, he visited once a year the tombs of the apostles at Rome. After the death of Pope Damasus II in 1048, in a diet of prelates and noblemen, with legates and deputies of the church of Rome, held at Worms, and honoured with the presence of the pious Emperor Henry III, surnamed the Black, Bruno, who had then governed the see of Toul twenty-two years, was pitched upon as the most worthy person to be exalted to the papacy. He being present used all his endeavours to avert the storm from falling on his head; and at length begged three days to deliberate upon the matter. This term he spent in tears and prayers, and in so rigorous a fast that he neither ate nor drank during all that time. The term being expired, he returned to the assembly and, hoping to convince his electors of his unworthiness, made a public general confession before them of the sins of his whole life, with abundance of tears, which drew also tears from all that were present: yet no man changed his opinion. He yielded at last only on condition that the whole clergy and people of Rome should agree to his promotion. After this declaration, he returned to Toul, and soon after Easter set out for Rome in the habit of a pilgrim; and alighting from his horse, some miles before he arrived at the city, walked to it and entered it barefoot. He was received with universal acclamations and his election ratified. He took possession of the see on the 12th of February 1049, under the name of Leo IX, being about forty-seven years old. He held it only five years, but they were filled with good works. He laboured strenuously in extirpating simony and the incestuous marriages which many noblemen had presumed to contract. In a journey which he made into Germany he signalized all his steps with religious actions,

held a council at Rheims, and consecrated the new church of St Remigius, belonging to the abbey, in 1049; and returned from Mentz, by Mount Vosge and Richenow, to Rome. In 1050, in a council at Rome,<sup>1</sup> he condemned the new heresy of Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers, a man full of self-conceit and a lover of novelty, who preached against the mystery of transubstantiation in the holy eucharist.

St Leo held another council at Vercelli the same year, composed of prelates from several countries, who unanimously confirmed the censure passed at Rome on Berengarius and his tenets, and condemned a book of John Scotus Erigena to be cast into the fire.<sup>2</sup> In 1051 the pope made a second visit to his ancient see of Toul, and favoured the abbey of St Mansu with great presents and exemptions. In 1052 he went again into Germany to reconcile the Emperor Henry III and Andrew, King of Hungary. In 1053 Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, began to renew the schism of the Greek church, which had been formerly commenced by Photius, but again healed. Cerularius and Leo, Bishop of Acrida, wrote a joint letter to John Bishop of Trani, in Apulia, in which they objected to the Latins, that they celebrated the holy eucharist in unleavened bread, fasted on the Saturdays in Lent, refrained not from eating blood, omitted to sing halleluia in Lent, and other such-like points of discipline. Malice must be to the last degree extravagant which could pretend to ground a schism upon such exceptions. St Leo answered him by an exhortation to peace, alleging for these practices of discipline the ancient law and tradition from St Peter, especially for the use of unleavened bread in the holy eucharist. He sent Cardinal Humbert, his legate, to Constantinople to vindicate the Latin church against the exceptions of the Greeks and preserve them in union with the Latins. He composed a learned and ample apology for this purpose.

The Normans, in the eleventh century, expelled the Saracens and Greeks out of the kingdom of Naples, but became themselves troublesome and enterprising neighbours to the holy see. Pope Leo implored against them the succours of the Emperor Henry III, to whom he made over Fuld, Bamberg, and other lands, which the popes then possessed in Germany, receiving in exchange Benevento and its territory in Italy. With these succours his holiness hoped to check the Normans, but his army was defeated by them and himself taken prisoner in a certain village and detained near a year, though always treated with great honour and respect. He spent his time in fasting and prayer, wore a hair-cloth next his skin, lay on a mat on the floor, with a stone for his pillow, slept little, and gave large alms. Falling sick, he was honourably sent back to Rome as he desired. Perceiving his end to draw nigh, he made moving exhorta-

<sup>1</sup> Herm. Contract. Chron. ad an. 1050. Lanfranc, in Bereng. c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Lanfranc, in Bereng. c. 4.

tions to his prelates; then caused himself to be carried into the Vatican church, where he prayed long and discoursed on the resurrection on the side of his grave. Having received extreme unction, he desired to be carried to the altar of St Peter and set down before it, where he prayed an hour prostrate; then, being lifted up again upon his couch, he heard mass, received the Viaticum, and soon after calmly expired, on the 19th of April 1054, being fifty years old, and having held the pontificate five years and two months. Miracles which followed his death proclaimed his glory with God. His name is inserted in the Roman Martyrology.

The devil has ever laboured with so much the greater fury to rob the church, and each particular Christian soul, of the most holy sacrament of the altar, or at least of its fruits, as in this adorable mystery Christ has displayed in our favour all the riches of his mercy and love, and has bestowed on us the most powerful means of grace and spiritual strength. It therefore behoves every Christian to exert his zeal in maintaining the honour of this divine sacrament and ensuring to himself and others such incomparable advantages. Besides the general sacred deposit of faith, here love and gratitude lay us under a particular obligation. St John, the disciple of love, lays open the true characteristics of this adorable mystery of love by a short introduction to his account of the last supper, soaring above the other evangelists and penetrating into the divine sanctuary of our Lord's breast to discover the infinite charity with which he was inflamed for us, and which prompted him to invent and institute it, saying that Jesus, knowing the moment was come for his leaving us and returning to his Father, out of that love which he always bore us, and which he continued to bear us to the end, when it exerted itself in such a wonderful manner as to seem to cast forth all its flames, he bequeathed us this truly divine legacy. Love called him to heaven for our sake, that he might prepare us places there and send us the holy Paraclete to perfect the great work of our sanctification. And the same boundless love engaged him to exhaust, as it were, his infinite wisdom and power to remain always corporally among us, and most intimately unite himself with us, to be our comfort and strength, and that we may most perfectly be animated by his spirit and live by him.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 19 :*

ST ELPHEGE, Archbishop of Canterbury, who first served God in a monastery in Gloucestershire; martyred by the Danes, 1012: THE VENERABLE JAMES DUCKETT, a printer, martyred under Elizabeth: ST LEO IX, Pope: ST URSMAR, Bishop, a model of all virtues from infancy, seeking always only to do the will of God.

APRIL 20

## ST AGNES OF MONTE PULCIANO, VIRGIN AND ABBESS

(A.D. 1317)

[From her life, written by F. Raymund of Capua, General of the Dominicans, thirty years after her death, with the remarks of F. Papebroke, Apr. t. ii. p. 791. Also her life, compiled from authentic instruments, by F. Laurence Surdini Mariani, in 1606; and in French by F. Roux, at Paris, in 1728.]

THIS holy virgin was a native of Monte Pulciano, in Tuscany. She had scarce attained to the use of reason when she conceived an extraordinary relish and ardour for prayer, and in her infancy often spent whole hours in reciting the Our Father and Hail Mary on her knees in some private corner of a chamber. At nine years of age she was placed by her parents in a convent of Sackins, of the Order of St Francis, so called from their habit, or at least their scapular, being made of sackcloth. Agnes, in so tender an age, was a model of all virtues to this austere community; and she renounced the world, though of a plentiful fortune, being sensible of its dangers before she knew what it was to enjoy it. At fifteen years of age she was removed to a new foundation of the Order of St Dominic, at Procono, in the county of Orvieto, and appointed abbess by Pope Nicholas IV. She slept on the ground, with a stone under her head in lieu of a pillow; and for fifteen years she fasted always on bread and water, till she was obliged by her directors, on account of sickness, to mitigate her austerities. Her townsmen, earnestly desiring to be possessed of her again, demolished a lewd house and erected upon the spot a nunnery, which they bestowed on her. This prevailed on her to return, and she established in this house nuns of the Order of St Dominic, which rule she herself professed. The gifts of miracles and prophecy rendered her famous among men, though humility, charity, and patience under her long sicknesses were the graces which recommended her to God. She died at Monte Pulciano on the 20th of April 1317, being forty-three years old. Her body was removed to the Dominicans' church of Orvieto in 1435, where it remains. Clement VIII approved her office for the use of the Order of St Dominic and inserted her name in the Roman Martyrology. She was solemnly canonized by Benedict XIII in 1726.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 20:*

ST AGNES OF MONTE PULCIANO: ST JAMES OF SCAVONIA or Illyricum, a Franciscan lay-brother who ended a holy life by a most happy death in 1485: ST SERF, the first bishop and apostle of the isles of Orkney in the fifth century, a disciple of St Palladius, whose apostolic spirit he inherited: and the VENERABLE THOMAS TICHBORNE, priest, a member of a famous English Catholic family, martyred under Elizabeth.

APRIL 21

ST ANSELM, CONFESSOR, ARCHBISHOP OF  
CANTERBURY

(A.D. 1109)

[From his life, written by Eadmer his disciple, in two books; also the same author's *History of Novelties*, in six books, from the year 1066 to 1122; and a poem on the miracles of St Anselm, probably by the same writer, published by Martenne, *Ampliss. Collectio*, t. vi. pp. 983, 987. The principal memorials relating to St Anselm are collected in the *Benedictin* edition of his works; from which a short abstract is here given. See *Gallia Christ. Nova*, t. xi. p. 223. Ceillier, t. xxi. p. 267.]

If the Norman conquerors stripped the English nation of its liberty and many temporal advantages, it must be owned that by their valour they raised the reputation of its arms and deprived their own country of its greatest men, both in church and state, with whom they adorned this kingdom; of which this great doctor and his master Lanfranc are instances. St Anselm was born of noble parents at Aoust, in Piedmont, about the year 1033. His pious mother took care to give him an early tincture of piety, and the impressions her instructions made upon him were as lasting as his life. At the age of fifteen, desirous of serving God in the monastic state, he petitioned an abbot to admit him into his house; but was refused out of apprehension of his father's displeasure. Neglecting, during the course of his studies, to cultivate the divine seed in his heart, he lost this inclination, and his mother being dead he fell into tepidity; and, without being sensible of the fatal tendency of vanity and pleasure, began to walk in the broad way of the world: so dangerous a thing is it to neglect the inspirations of grace! The saint, in his genuine meditations, expresses the deepest sentiments of compunction for these disorders, which his perfect spirit of penance exceedingly exaggerated to him, and which, like another David, he never ceased most bitterly to bewail to the end of his days. The ill-usage he met with from his father induced him, after his mother's death, to leave his own country, where he had made a successful beginning in his studies; and, after a diligent application to them for three years in Burgundy (then a distinct government) and in France, invited by the great fame of Lanfranc, Prior of Bec, in Normandy, under the Abbot Herluin, he went thither and became his scholar. On his father's death, Anselm advised with him about the state of life he was to embrace; as whether he should live upon his estate to employ its produce in alms, or should renounce it at once and embrace a monastic and eremitical life. Lanfranc, feeling an overbearing affection for so promising a disciple, durst not advise him in his vocation, fearing the bias of his own inclination; but he sent him to Maurillus, the holy Archbishop of Rouen. By him Anselm, after he had laid open to him his interior, was determined to enter the monastic state at Bec, and accord-

ingly became a member of that house at the age of twenty-seven, in 1060, under the Abbot Herluin. Three years after, Lanfranc was made Abbot of St Stephen's at Caen, and Anselm Prior of Bec. At this promotion several of the monks murmured on account of his youth; but, by patience and sweetness, he won the affections of them all, and by little condescensions at first, so worked upon an irregular young monk, called Osbern, as to perfect his conversion and make him one of the most fervent. In regard to the management and tutoring of youth, he looked upon excessive severity as highly pernicious. Eadmer has recorded a conversation he had on this subject with a neighbouring abbot,<sup>1</sup> who, by a conformity to our saint's practice and advice in this regard, experienced that success in his labours which he had till then aspired to in vain by harshness and severity.

St Anselm applied himself diligently to the study of every part of theology, by the clear light of scripture and tradition. Whilst he was prior at Bec, he wrote his *Monologium*, so called because in this work he speaks alone, explaining the metaphysical proofs of the existence and nature of God. Also his *Proslogium*, or contemplation of God's attributes. He likewise wrote, whilst prior, *On Truth*, on *Free-will*, and *On the Fall of the Devil*, or, *On the Origin of Evil*; also his *Grammarians*, which is in reality a treatise on *Dialectic*, or the *Art of Reasoning*.

Anselm's reputation drew to Bec great numbers from all the neighbouring kingdoms. Herluin dying in 1078, he was chosen Abbot of Bec, being forty-five years old, of which he had been prior fifteen. The abbey of Bec being possessed at that time of some lands in England, this obliged the abbot to make his appearance there in person at certain times. This occasioned our saint's first journeys thither, which his tender regard for his old friend Lanfranc, at that time Archbishop of Canterbury, made the more agreeable. He was received with great honour and esteem by all ranks of people, both in church and state, and there was no one who did not think it a real misfortune if he had not been able to serve him in something or other. King William himself, whose title of Conqueror rendered him haughty and inaccessible to his subjects, was so affable to the good Abbot of Bec that he seemed to be another man in his presence. The saint, on his side, was all to all, by courtesy and charity, that he might find occasions of giving everyone some suitable instructions to promote their salvation; which were so much the more effectual as he communicated them, not as some do, with the dictatorial air of a master, but in a simple familiar manner, or by indirect though sensible examples. In the year 1092, Hugh, the great Earl of Chester, by three pressing messages, entreated Anselm to come again into England, to assist him, then dangerously sick, and to give his advice about the foundation of a monastery which

<sup>1</sup> N. 30.



that nobleman had undertaken at St WerEBurges's church at Chester. He found him recovered, but the affairs of his own abbey, and of that which the earl was erecting, detained him five months in England. The metropolitan see of Canterbury had been vacant ever since the death of Lanfranc in 1089. The sacrilegious and tyrannical king, William Rufus, who succeeded his father in 1087, by an injustice unknown till his time, usurped the revenues of vacant benefices, and deferred his permission, or *cong   d'  lire*, in order to the filling the episcopal sees, that he might the longer enjoy their income. Having thus seized into his hands the revenues of the archbishopric, he reduced the monks of Canterbury to a scanty allowance, oppressing them moreover by his officers with continual insults, threats, and vexations. He had been much solicited by the most virtuous among the nobility to supply the see of Canterbury, in particular, with a person proper for that station; but continued deaf to all their remonstrances and answered them, at Christmas 1093, that neither Anselm nor any other should have that bishopric whilst he lived; and this he swore to by the holy face of Lucca, meaning a great crucifix in the cathedral of that city held in singular veneration, his usual oath. He was seized soon after with a violent fit of sickness, which in a few days brought him to extremity. He was then at Gloucester, and seeing himself in this condition, signed a proclamation, which was published, to release all those that had been taken prisoners in the field, to discharge all debts owing to the crown, and to grant a general pardon; promising likewise to govern according to law and to punish the instruments of injustice with exemplary severity. He moreover nominated Anselm to the see of Canterbury, at which all were extremely satisfied but the good abbot himself, who made all the decent opposition imaginable; alleging his age, his want of health and vigour enough for so weighty a charge, his unfitness for the management of public and secular affairs, which he had always declined to the best of his power. The king was extremely concerned at his opposition, and asked him why he endeavoured to ruin him in the other world, being convinced that he should lose his soul in case he died before the archbishopric was filled. The king was seconded by the bishops and others present, who not only told him they were scandalized at his refusal, but added that, if he persisted in it, all the grievances of the church and nation would be placed to his account. Thereupon they forced a pastoral staff into his hands, in the king's presence, carried him into the church, and sung Te Deum on the occasion. This was on the 6th of March 1093. He still declined the charge till the king had promised him the restitution of all the lands that were in the possession of that see in Lanfranc's time. Anselm also insisted that he should acknowledge Urban II for lawful pope. Things being thus adjusted, Anselm was consecrated with great solemnity on the 4th of December 1093.

Anselm had not been long in possession of the see of Canterbury when the king, intending to wrest the duchy of Normandy out of the hands of his brother Robert, made large demands on his subjects for supplies. On this occasion, not content with the five hundred pounds (a very large sum in those days) offered him by the archbishop, the king insisted, at the instigation of some of his courtiers, on a thousand, for his nomination to the archbishopric, which Anselm constantly refused to pay; pressing him also to fill vacant abbeys and to consent that bishops should hold councils as formerly, and be allowed by canons to repress crimes and abuses, which were multiplied and passed into custom for want of such a remedy, especially incestuous marriages and other abominable debaucheries. The king was extremely provoked, and declared no one should extort from him his abbeys any more than his crown. And from that day he sought to deprive Anselm of his see. William, Bishop of Durham, and the other prelates, acquiesced readily in the king's orders, by which he forbade them to obey him as their primate, or treat him as archbishop, alleging for reason that he obeyed Pope Urban during the schism, whom the English nation had not acknowledged. The king, having brought over most of the bishops to his measures, applied to the temporal nobility, and bid them disclaim the archbishop; but they resolutely answered that since he was their archbishop and had a right to superintend the affairs of religion, it was not in their power to disengage themselves from his authority, especially as there was no crime or misdemeanour proved against him. King William then, by his ambassador, acknowledged Urban for true pope, and promised him a yearly pension from England if he would depose Anselm; but the legate whom his holiness sent told that king that it was what could not be done. St Anselm wrote to the pope to thank him for the pall he had sent him by that legate, complaining of the affliction in which he lived under a burden too heavy for him to bear, and regretting the tranquillity of his solitude which he had lost.<sup>1</sup> Finding the king always seeking occasions to oppress his church unless he fed him with its treasures, which he regarded as the patrimony of the poor (though he readily furnished his contingent in money and troops to his expeditions and to all public burdens), the holy prelate earnestly desired to leave England, that he might apply in person to the pope for his counsel and assistance. The king refused him twice: and on his applying to him a third time, he assured the saint that, if he left that kingdom, he would seize upon the whole revenue of the see of Canterbury, and that he should never more be acknowledged metropolitan. But the saint, being persuaded he could not in conscience abide any longer in the realm to be a witness of the oppression of the church, and not have it in his power to remedy it, set

<sup>1</sup> B. iii. Ep. 37.

out from Canterbury in October 1097, in the habit of a pilgrim; took shipping at Dover and landed at Witsan, having with him two monks, Eadmer, who wrote his life, and Baldwin. He made some stay at Cluni with St Hugh the abbot, and at Lyons with the good Archbishop Hugh. It not being safe travelling any further towards Rome at that time on account of the antipope's party lying in the way, and Anselm falling sick soon after, this made it necessary for him to stay longer at Lyons than he had designed. However, he left that city the March following, in 1098, on the pope's invitation, and was honourably received by him. His holiness having heard his cause, assured him of his protection, and wrote to the king of England for his re-establishment in his rights and possessions. Anselm also wrote to the king at the same time; and, after ten days' stay in the pope's palace, retired to the monastery of St Saviour, in Calabria, the air of Rome not agreeing with his health. Here he finished his work, entitled *Why God was made Man*, in two books, showing, against infidels, the wisdom, justice, and expediency of the mystery of the incarnation for man's redemption. He had begun this work in England, where he also wrote his book, *On the Faith of the Trinity and Incarnation*, dedicated to Pope Urban II, in which he refuted Roscelin, the master, Peter Abailard, who maintained an erroneous opinion in regard to the Trinity.

The pope having called a council, which was to meet at Bari, in October 1098, in order to effect a reconciliation of the Greeks with the Catholic Church, ordered the saint to be present at it. It consisted of one hundred and twenty-three bishops. The Greeks having proposed the question about the procession of the Holy Ghost, whether this was from the Father only, or from the Father and the Son; the disputation being protracted, the pope called aloud for Anselm, saying, "Anselm, our father and our master, where are you?" And causing him to sit next to him, told him that the present occasion required his learning and elocution to defend the church against her enemies, and that he thought God had brought him thither for that purpose. Anselm spoke to the point with so much learning, judgment, and penetration that he silenced the Greeks and gave such a general satisfaction that all present joined in pronouncing Anathema against those that should afterwards deny the procession of the Holy Ghost from both the Father and the Son. This affair being at an end, the proceedings of the King of England fell next under debate. And on this occasion his simony, his oppressions of the church, his persecution of Anselm, and his incorrigibleness, after frequent admonitions, were so strongly represented that the pope, at the instance of the council, was just going to pronounce him excommunicated. Anselm had hitherto sat silent, but at this he rose up, and casting himself on his knees before the pope, entreated him to stop the censure. And now the

council, who had admired our saint for his parts and learning, were further charmed with him on account of his humane and Christian dispositions in behalf of one that had used him so roughly. The saint's petition in behalf of his sovereign was granted; and on the council breaking up, the pope and Anselm returned to Rome. The pope, however, sent to the king a threat of excommunication, to be issued in a council to be shortly after held at Rome, unless he made satisfaction: but the king, by his ambassador, obtained a long delay. Upon the death of Urban II, he wrote an account of his case to his successor, Pascal II. King William Rufus being snatched away by sudden death, without the sacraments, on the 2nd of August 1100, St Anselm, who was then in the abbey of Chaize-Dieu, in Auvergne, lamented bitterly his unhappy end and made haste to England, whither he was invited by King Henry I. He landed at Dover on the 23rd of September and was received with great joy and extraordinary respect. And having in a few days recovered the fatigue of his journey, went to wait on the king, who received him very graciously. But this harmony was of no long continuance. The new king required of Anselm to be reinvested by him, and do the customary homage of his predecessors for his see; but the saint absolutely refused to comply and made a report on the proceedings of the late synod at Rome, in which the laity that gave investitures for abbeys or cathedrals were excommunicated; and those that received such investitures were put under the same censure. But this not satisfying the king, it was agreed between them to consult the pope upon the subject. The court in the meantime was very much alarmed at the preparations making by the king's elder brother, Robert, Duke of Normandy, who, being returned from the holy war in Palestine, claimed the crown of England and threatened to invade the land. The nobles, though they had sworn allegiance to Henry, were ready to join him; and on his landing with a formidable army at Portsmouth, several declared for the duke. The king being in great danger of losing his crown, was very liberal in promises to Anselm on this occasion; assuring him that he would henceforward leave the business of religion wholly to him, and be always governed by the advice and orders of the apostolic see. Anselm omitted nothing on his side to prevent a revolt from the king. Not content with sending his quota of armed men, he strongly represented to the disaffected nobles the heinousness of their crime of perjury; and that they ought rather lose their lives than break through their oaths and fail in their sworn allegiance to their prince. He also published an excommunication against Robert, as an invader, who thereupon came to an accommodation with Henry and left England. And thus, as Eadmer relates, the archbishop, strengthening the king's party, kept the crown upon his head. One day, as he was riding to his manor of Herse, a hare, pursued by the dogs, ran under his horse for refuge; at which the saint

stopped and the hounds stood at bay. The hunters laughed, but the saint said, weeping, "This hare puts me in mind of a poor sinner just upon the point of departing this life, surrounded with devils waiting to carry away their prey." The hare going off, he forbade her to be pursued and was obeyed, not a hound stirring after her. In like manner every object served to raise his mind to God, with whom he always conversed in his heart, and, in the midst of noise and tumult, he enjoyed the tranquillity of holy contemplation—so strongly was his soul sequestered from, and raised above, the world.

King Henry, though so much indebted to Anselm, still persisted in his claim of the right of giving the investitures of benefices. Anselm, in 1102, held a national council in St Peter's church at Westminster, in which, among other things, it was forbid to sell men like cattle, which had till then been practised in England; and many canons relating to discipline were drawn up. He persisted to refuse to ordain bishops, named by the king, without a canonical election. The contest became every day more serious. At last the king and nobles persuaded Anselm to go in person and consult the pope about the matter: the king also sent a deputy to his holiness. The saint embarked on the 27th of April in 1103. Pope Pascal II condemned the king's pretensions to the investitures and excommunicated those who should receive church dignities from him. St Anselm being advanced on his return to England as far as Lyons, received there an intimation of an order from King Henry, forbidding him to proceed on his journey home unless he would conform to his will. He therefore remained at Lyons, where he was much honoured by his old friend the Archbishop Hugh. From thence he retired to his abbey of Bec, where he received from the pope a commission to judge the cause of the Archbishop of Rouen, accused of several crimes. He was also allowed to receive into communion such as had accepted investitures from the crown, which, though still disallowed of, the bishops and abbots were so far dispensed with as to do homage for their temporalities. The king was so pleased with this condescension of the pope that he sent immediately to Bec to invite St Anselm home in the most obliging manner, but a grievous sickness detained him. The king coming over into Normandy in 1106, articles of agreement were drawn up between him and the archbishop at Bec, pursuant to the letter St Anselm had received from Rome a few months before; and the pope very readily confirmed the agreement. In this expedition Henry defeated his brother Robert, and sent him prisoner into England, where he died. St Anselm hereupon returned to England in 1106, and was received by the Queen Maud, who came to meet him, and by the whole kingdom of England, as it were in triumph.

The last years of his life, his health was entirely broken. Having for six months laboured under an hectic decay, with an entire loss of appetite,

under which disorder he would be carried every day to assist at holy mass, he happily expired, laid on sackcloth and ashes, at Canterbury, on the 21st of April 1109, in the sixteenth year of his episcopal dignity, and of his age the seventy-sixth. He was buried in his cathedral. By a decree of Clement XI, in 1720,<sup>1</sup> he is honoured among the doctors of the church. We have authentic accounts of many miracles wrought by this saint in the histories of Eadmer and others.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 21 :*

Three SAINTS ANASTASIUS : one, the first Patriarch of Antioch, who spoke little but had an extraordinary power of comforting the afflicted. His letters and several very pious sermons are still existent : ST ANASTASIUS THE SINAITE, anchorite : and ST ANASTASIUS, surnamed The Younger, Patriarch of Antioch, slain by the Jews in a sedition : ST ANSELM, Archbishop of Canterbury : ST BEUNO, Abbot of Clynnog, in Carnarvonshire : ST EINGAN, a King of the Scots : and ST MALRUBIUS, martyr, who led an austere life in the County of Ross, Ireland, and was martyred by Norman pirates, to whom he attempted to preach Christ.

## APRIL 22

### SAINTS SOTER AND CAIUS, POPES AND MARTYRS

ST SOTER was raised to the papacy upon the death of St Anicetus in 173. By the sweetness of his discourses, he comforted all persons with the tenderness of a father, and assisted the indigent with liberal alms, especially those who suffered for the faith. He liberally extended his charities, according to the custom of his predecessors, to remote churches, particularly to that of Corinth, to which he addressed an excellent letter, as St Dionysius of Corinth testifies in his letter of thanks, who adds that his letter was found worthy to be read for their edification on Sundays at their assemblies to celebrate the divine mysteries, together with the letter of St Clement, pope. St Soter vigorously opposed the heresy of Montanus, and governed the church to the year 177. See Eusebius, from whose ecclesiastical history these few circumstances are gleaned. In the Martyrologies this pope is styled a martyr.

### ST CAIUS, POPE

SUCCEEDED St Eutychian in the apostolic see in 283. The church then enjoyed a calm, but was soon after disturbed by a tumultuous persecution for two years, on the death of Carinus. St Caius encouraged St Sebastian and the other martyrs and confessors. However, to preserve himself for his flock, he withdrew for a time to avoid the fury of the storm. The ancient pontificals say he was of Dalmatia, and related to the Emperor Diocletian. Having sat twelve years four months, he died on the 21st of April 296, and was interred on the 22nd, on which day his name is

<sup>1</sup> Bullar. Rom. t. i. p. 441, and Clemens XI, Op. t. ii. p. 1215.

honoured in the Liberian calendar. His sufferings obtained him the title of martyr, as Orsi takes notice.<sup>1</sup>

What had not these primitive saints to suffer, not only from the persecutions of infidel princes and magistrates, but also from the ignorance, stupidity, jealousy, and malice of many whom they laboured daily to gain to Christ, and from the manifold trials and dangers of so many souls in their dear flock whom they bore in their hearts and whose sufferings they felt much more severely than their own! We are not to be surprised. These were so many special effects of a most tender love and mercy in Him by whose providence these trials were sent them: they were the steps by which their souls were raised to the summit of perfect virtue. We perhaps daily meet with domestic persecutions and contradictions, and look upon them as obstacles to our progress in the way of perfection, as thorns in our road. They may, indeed, be called thorns, but they produce and guard the sweetest and most beautiful flowers of virtue. It is owing to our sloth, cowardice, and impatience; it is our fault if they are hindrances of what they are designed by God to advance and perfect in our souls. Virtues exercised in prosperity, which are fair to the eye and applauded by men, are usually false or superficial. A perpetual spring would produce only leaves and flowers and bring no fruit to maturity. To understand the incomparable value and merit of the little crosses of which we are so apt to complain, we must not lose sight of the saints. Those Christian heroes, of whom the world was not worthy, all suffered and were persecuted in many ways. These crosses both purchased and ensured to them their greatest crowns.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 22 :*

SAINTS AZADES, THARBA, and many others, martyrs in Persia, 341 : SAINTS EPIPODIUS and ALEXANDER, the latter a Greek, martyred at Lyons : ST LEONIDES, a Christian philosopher versed in sacred and profane sciences, martyr : ST OPPORTUNA, virgin, Abbess of Montreuil, three miles from Seez, in Normandy, where her brother ST CHRODEGANG was bishop : ST RUFUS, anchorite at Glendaloch, in Ireland, and buried there : SAINTS SOTER and CAIUS, Popes. St Caius encouraged St Sebastian and other martyrs to persevere : and ST THEODORUS of Siceon, Bishop, devoted to prayer from his childhood.

#### APRIL 23

### ST GEORGE, MARTYR

(ABOUT THE YEAR 303)

ST GEORGE is honoured in the Catholic Church as one of the most illustrious martyrs of Christ. The Greeks have long distinguished him by the title of The Great Martyr, and keep his festival a holiday of obligation. There stood formerly in Constantinople five or six churches dedicated in his honour, the oldest of which was always said to have been

<sup>1</sup> T. iii. i; 8, n. 46, p. 500.

built by Constantine the Great, who seems also to have been the founder of the church of St George, which stood over his tomb in Palestine. Both these churches were certainly built under the first Christian emperors. In the middle of the sixth age, the Emperor Justinian erected a new church in honour of this saint at Bizanes, in Lesser Armenia: the Emperor Mauritius founded one in Constantinople. It is related in the life of St Theodorus of Siceon that he served God a long while in a chapel which bore the name of St George, had a particular devotion to this glorious martyr, and strongly recommended the same to Mauritius when he foretold him the empire. One of the churches of St George in Constantinople, called Manges, with a monastery adjoining, gave to the Hellespont the name of the Arm of St George. To this day is St George honoured as principal patron, or tutelar saint, by several Eastern nations, particularly the Georgians. The Byzantine historians relate several battles to have been gained, and other miracles wrought, through his intercession. From frequent pilgrimages to his church and tomb in Palestine, performed by those who visited the Holy Land, his veneration was much propagated over the West. St Gregory of Tours mentions him as highly celebrated in France in the sixth century. St Gregory the Great ordered an old church of St George, which was fallen to decay, to be repaired. His office is found in the sacramentary of that pope and many others. St Clotildis, wife of Clovis, the first Christian king of France, erected altars under his name; and the church of Chelles, built by her, was originally dedicated in his honour. The intercession of this saint was implored especially in battles and by warriors, as appears by several instances in the Byzantine history, and he is said to have been himself a great soldier. He is, at this day, the tutelar saint of the republic of Genoa; and was chosen by our ancestors in the same quality under our first Norman kings. The great national council, held at Oxford in 1222, commanded his feast to be kept a holiday of the lesser rank throughout all England. Under his name and ensign was instituted by our victorious king, Edward III, in 1330, the most noble Order of knighthood in Europe, consisting of twenty-five knights besides the sovereign. Its establishment is dated fifty years before the knights of St Michael were instituted in France by Louis XI; eighty years before the Order of the Golden Fleece, established by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy; and one hundred and ninety years before the Order of St Andrew was set up in Scotland by James V. The emperor Frederic IV instituted, in 1470, an Order of knights in honour of St George; and an honourable military Order in Venice bears his name.

The extraordinary devotion of all Christendom to this saint is an authentic proof how glorious his triumph and name have always been in the church. All his acts relate that he suffered under Diocletian at





## SAINT GEORGIUS

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The evil of paganism which the valiant St. George fought is always symbolised in paintings by a dragon. Some of the most inspiring legends in the world have been written about this Martyr Saint of the fourth century, who, it is said, perished at the hands of the wicked Roman Emperor, Diocletian. Besides being honoured as Patron Saint of England, St. George is principal patron of several Eastern nations.

Nicomedia. Joseph Assemani shows, from the unanimous consent of all churches, that he was crowned on the 23rd of April. According to the account given us by Metaphrastes, he was born in Cappadocia, of noble Christian parents. After the death of his father he went with his mother into Palestine, she being a native of that country, and having there a considerable estate, which fell to her son George. He was strong and robust in body, and having embraced the profession of a soldier, was made a tribune, or colonel, in the army. By his courage and conduct he was soon preferred to higher stations by the Emperor Diocletian. When that prince waged war against the Christian religion, St George laid aside the marks of his dignity, threw up his commission and posts, and complained to the emperor himself of his severities and bloody edicts. He was immediately cast into prison, and tried, first by promises, and afterwards put to the question and tortured with great cruelty; but nothing could shake his constancy. The next day he was led through the city and beheaded. Some think him to have been the same illustrious young man who tore down the edicts when they were first fixed up at Nicomedia, as Lactantius relates in his book, *On the Death of the Persecutors*, and Eusebius in his history. The reason why St George has been regarded as the patron of military men is partly upon the score of his profession, and partly upon the credit of a relation of his appearing to the Christian army in the holy war, before the battle of Antioch. The success of this battle proving fortunate to the Christians, under Godfrey of Bouillon, made the name of St George more famous in Europe and disposed the military men to implore more particularly his intercession. This devotion was confirmed, as it is said, by an apparition of St George to our king, Richard I, in his expedition against the Saracens; which vision being declared to the troops, was to them a great encouragement, and they soon after defeated the enemy. St George is usually painted on horseback and tilting at a dragon under his feet; but this representation is no more than an emblematical figure, purporting that by his faith and Christian fortitude he conquered the devil, called the dragon in the Apocalypse.

Though many dishonour the profession of arms by a licentiousness of manners, yet, to show us that perfect sanctity is attainable in all states, we find the names of more soldiers recorded in the Martyrologies than almost of any other profession. Every true disciple of Christ must be a martyr in the disposition of his heart, as he must be ready to lose all, and to suffer anything, rather than to offend God. Every good Christian is also a martyr, by the patience and courage with which he bears all trials. There is no virtue more necessary, nor of which the exercise ought to be more frequent, than patience. In this mortal life we have continually something to suffer from disappointments in affairs, from the severity of

the seasons, from the injustice, caprice, peevishness, jealousy, or antipathy of others; and from ourselves, in pains either of mind or body. Even our own weaknesses and faults are to us subjects of patience. And as we have continually many burdens, both of our own and others, to bear, it is only in patience that we are to possess our souls. This affords us comfort in all our sufferings and maintains our souls in unshaken tranquillity and peace. This is true greatness of mind and the virtue of heroic souls. But, alas! every accident ruffles and disturbs us; and we are insupportable even to ourselves. What comfort should we find, what peace should we enjoy, what treasures of virtue should we heap up, what an harvest of merits should we reap, if we had learned the true spirit of Christian patience! This is the martyrdom and the crown of every faithful disciple of Christ.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 23 :*

ST ADALBERT, Bishop of Prague, consecrated to God in infancy by his parents, who feared to lose him by sickness. "Oh Lord, let not this son live to us but to *You*, among the clergy and under the patronage of your holy Mother": ST GEORGE, martyr, Patron of England and of Christian soldiers: ST GERARD, Bishop of Toul, who being afflicted by the death of his mother, who was struck by lightning, consecrated himself to a life of penance: ST IBAR or Ivor, bishop in Ireland; he died about the year 500.

APRIL 24

## ST MELLITUS, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, CONFESSOR

HE was a Roman abbot whom St Gregory sent over hither in 601, at the head of a second colony of missionaries, to assist St Austin, by whom he was ordained the first Bishop of London, or of the East-Saxons; baptized Sebert the king, with a great part of his nation; and by his liberality, in 604, laid the foundation of the cathedral church of St Paul's and, in 609, of the monastery of St Peter, at Thorney, which was rebuilt by King Edgar, and again most sumptuously by St Edward the Confessor, and is now called Westminster. This Christian and learned prince, dying about 616, left his dominions to his three sons, Sexred, Seward, and Sigebert, whom he had not been so happy as to recover from their idolatry, though they had kept their heathenism private during their father's life. After his death they declared themselves Pagans, and gave their subjects the liberty of returning to their former idolatrous worship. Yet, when they saw our holy bishop at the altar and giving the blessed eucharist to the people, they would not be satisfied unless he would give them some of that fine white bread, as they called it, he was used to give their father. He told them their request should be granted on condition they would be baptized, as their father was; but this they would not hear of, alleging they had no need of baptism; but still insisted on receiving the con-

secrated bread; and on the bishop's refusal to gratify them in their unreasonable request, they banished him their dominions. These three princes, after a reign of six years, going on an expedition against the West-Saxons, were all three slain in battle. But, though the chief promoters of paganism were taken off, their people, being inured again to idolatry, did not return to the faith before the year 628, according to the Saxon annals. St Mellitus passed over to France but soon returned, and upon the death of St Laurence, in 619, was translated to the see of Canterbury, being the third archbishop of that see. Whilst sick of the gout he, by his prayers, stopped a furious conflagration which had already laid no small part of that city in ashes, and which no hands had been able to get under. He died April the 24th, 624. See Bede, Le Neve's Fasti, Goscelin, and Capgrave.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 24 :*

SAINTS BONA and DODA, Abbesses, the latter a niece of St Bona and a faithful imitator of her spirit and her virtues : ST FIDELIS OF SIGMARENGEN : THE GOOD THIEF, who confessed Christ as he was dying : ST MELLITUS, Archbishop of Canterbury, a Roman abbot whom St Gregory sent here in 601 to help St Augustine : and BLESSED ROBERT, first Abbot and founder of the Benedictine monastery of Chaise-Dieu, in Auvergne.

#### APRIL 25

### ST MARK, EVANGELIST, PATRON SAINT OF VENICE

[From Eusebius, St Jerom, &c., collected by Tillemont, t. ii. p. 89 ; Calmet, t. vii., &c.]

ST MARK was of Jewish extraction. The style of his gospel abounding with Hebrewisms shows that he was by birth a Jew, and that the Hebrew language was more natural to him than the Greek. His acts say he was of Cyrenaica, and Bede from them adds, of the race of Aaron. Papias, quoted by Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> St Austin, Theodoret, and Bede say he was converted by the apostles after Christ's resurrection. St Irenæus calls him the disciple and interpreter of St Peter, and, according to Origen and St Jerom, he is the same Mark whom St Peter calls his son. By his office of interpreter to St Peter, some understood that St Mark was the author of the style of his epistles; others, that he was employed as a translator into Greek or Latin of what the apostle had written in his own tongue, as occasion might require it. St Jerom and some others take him to be the same with that John, surnamed Mark, son to the sister of St Barnabas; but it is generally believed they were different persons, and that the latter was with St Paul in the East at the same time that the Evangelist was at Rome or at Alexandria. According to Papias, and St Clement of Alexandria, he wrote his gospel at the request of the Romans; who, as they relate, desired to have that committed to writing which St Peter

<sup>1</sup> Hist. b. iii. c. 39.

had taught them by word of mouth. Mark, to whom this request was made, did accordingly set himself to recollect what he had by long conversation learned from St Peter; for it is affirmed by some that he had never seen our Saviour in the flesh. St Peter rejoiced at the affection of the faithful; and having revised the work, approved of it, and authorized it to be read in the religious assemblies of the faithful. Hence it might be that, as we learn from Tertullian, some attributed this gospel to St Peter himself. Many judge, by comparing the two gospels, that St Mark abridged that of St Matthew; for he relates the same things, and often uses the same words; but he adds several particular circumstances and changes the order of the narration, in which he agrees with St Luke and St John. He relates two histories not mentioned by St Matthew, namely, that of the widow giving two mites,<sup>1</sup> and that of Christ's appearing to the two disciples going to Emmaus. St Austin calls him the Abridger of St Matthew. But Ceillier and some others think nothing clearly proves that he made use of St Matthew's gospel. This evangelist is concise in his narrations, and writes with a most pleasing simplicity and elegance. St Chrysostom admires the humility of St Peter (we may add also of his disciple St Mark) when he observes that his evangelist makes no mention of the high commendations which Christ gave that apostle on his making that explicit confession of his being the Son of God; neither does he mention his walking on the water; but gives at full length the history of St Peter's denying his Master, with all its circumstances. He wrote his gospel in Italy, and in all appearance before the year of Christ 49.

St Peter sent his disciples from Rome to found other churches. Some moderns say St Mark founded that of Aquileia. It is certain, at least, that he was sent by St Peter into Egypt, and was by him appointed Bishop of Alexandria (which, after Rome, was accounted the second city of the world), as Eusebius, St Epiphanius, St Jerom, and others assure us. Pope Gelasius, in his Roman Council, Palladius, and the Greeks universally add that he finished his course at Alexandria by a glorious martyrdom. St Peter left Rome and returned into the East in the ninth year of Claudius and forty-ninth of Christ. About that time St Mark went first into Egypt, according to the Greeks. The Oriental Chronicle, published by Abraham Eckellensis, places his arrival at Alexandria only in the seventh year of Nero and sixtieth of Christ. Both which accounts agree with the relation of his martyrdom, contained in the ancient acts published by the Bollandists, which were made use of by Bede and the Oriental Chronicle, and seem to have been extant in Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries. By them we are told that St Mark landed at Cyrene, in Pentapolis, a part of Lybia bordering on Egypt, and by innumerable miracles brought many over to

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii.

the faith, and demolished several temples of the idols. He likewise carried the gospel into other provinces of Lybia, into Thebais, and other parts of Egypt. This country was heretofore of all others the most superstitious; but the benediction of God, promised to it by the prophets, was plentifully showered down upon it during the ministry of this apostle. He employed twelve years in preaching in these parts before he, by a particular call of God, entered Alexandria, where he soon assembled a very numerous church,<sup>1</sup> of which it is thought, says Fleury, that the Jewish converts then made up the greatest part. And it is the opinion of St Jerom and Eusebius that these were the Therapeutes described by Philo,<sup>2</sup> and the first founders of the ascetic life in Egypt.

The prodigious progress of the faith in Alexandria stirred up the heathens against this Galilæan. The apostle therefore left the city, having ordained St Anianus bishop, in the eighth year of Nero, of Christ the sixty-second, and returned to Pentapolis where he preached two years, and then visited his church of Alexandria, which he found increased in faith and grace as well as in numbers. He encouraged the faithful and again withdrew; the Oriental Chronicle says to Rome. On his return to Alexandria, the heathens called him a magician on account of his miracles, and resolved upon his death. God, however, concealed him long from them. At last, on the pagan feast of the idol Serapis, some that were employed to discover the holy man found him offering to God the prayer of the oblation, or the mass. Overjoyed to find him in their power, they seized him, tied his feet with cords and dragged him about the streets, crying out that the ox must be led to Bucoles, a place near the sea, full of rocks and precipices, where probably oxen were fed. This happened on Sunday, the 24th of April, in the year of Christ 68, of Nero the fourteenth, about three years after the death of SS. Peter and Paul. The saint was thus dragged the whole day, staining the stones with his blood and leaving the ground strewn with pieces of his flesh; all the while he ceased not to praise and thank God for his sufferings. At night he was thrown into prison, in which God comforted him by two visions, which Bede has also mentioned in his true Martyrology. The next day the infidels dragged him, as before, till he happily expired on the 25th of April, on which day the Oriental and Western churches keep his festival. The Christians gathered up the remains of his mangled body and buried them at Bucoles, where they afterwards usually assembled for prayer. His body was honourably kept there, in a church built on the spot, in 310; and towards the end of the fourth age the holy priest Philoromus made a pilgrimage thither from Galatia to visit this saint's tomb, as Palladius recounts. His body was still honoured at Alexandria, under the Mahometans, in the eighth age, in a marble tomb.<sup>3</sup> It is said to

<sup>1</sup> B. ii. c. 16.<sup>2</sup> De Vita contempl.<sup>3</sup> See Bolland, p. 352.

have been conveyed by stealth to Venice in 815. Bernard, a French monk, who travelled over the East in 870, writes that the body of St Mark was not then at Alexandria, because the Venetians had carried it to their isles.<sup>1</sup> It is said to be deposited in the Doge's stately rich chapel of St Mark in a secret place, that it may not be stolen, under one of the great pillars. This saint is honoured by that republic with extraordinary devotion as principal patron.

The great litany is sung on this day to beg that God would be pleased to avert from us the scourges which our sins deserve. The origin of this custom is usually ascribed to St Gregory the Great, who, by a public supplication or litany, with a procession of the whole city of Rome, divided into seven bands or companies, obtained of God the extinction of a dreadful pestilence in the year 590. St Gregory the Great speaks of a like procession and litany which he made thirteen years after, on the 29th of August, in the year 603. Whence it is inferred that St Gregory performed this ceremony every year, though not on the 25th of April, on which day we find it settled, in the close of the seventh century, long before the same was appointed for the feast of St Mark.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing is more tender and more moving than the instructions which several councils, fathers, and holy pastors have given on the manner of performing public supplications and processions. The first council of Orleans orders masters to excuse their servants from work and attendance, that all the faithful may be assembled together to unite their prayers and sighs. A council of Mentz<sup>3</sup> commanded that all should assist barefoot and covered with sackcloth; which was for some time observed in that church. St Charles Borromæo endeavoured, by pathetic instructions and pastoral letters, to revive the ancient piety of the faithful on the great litany and the rogation days. According to the regulations which he made, the supplications and processions began before break of day and continued till three or four o'clock in the afternoon. On them he fasted himself on bread and water and preached several times, exhorting the people to sincere penance. A neglect to assist at the public supplications of the church is a grievous disorder and perhaps one of the principal causes of the little piety and sanctity which are left, and of the scandals which reign amongst Christians. We must join this procession with hearts penetrated with humility, and spend some time in prayer, pious reading, and the exercises of compunction. What we are chiefly to ask of God on these days is the remission of our sins, which are the only true evil and the cause of all the chastisements which we suffer or have reason to fear. We must, secondly, beg that God avert from us all scourges and

<sup>1</sup> See Mabillon, *Act. Bened.* p. 502.  
Can. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Bebeth, c. 122; Fronto in *Calend.* p. 71, &c.

calamities which our crimes deserve, and that he bestow his blessing on the fruits of the earth.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 25 :*

ST ANIANUS, second Bishop of Alexandria, a shoemaker of that city whose hand, wounded by an awl, was healed by St Mark. He governed the Church four years with St Mark and eighteen years after his death, and is named on the same day as the Evangelist : ST IVEA, a Persian bishop who preached the faith in England ; St Ives, in Cornwall, where he died, is named after him : ST KEBIUS, Bishop, who preached penance in Cornwall in the fourth century : ST MACULL of Ireland : ST MARK, Evangelist : and ST PHÆBADIUS, Bishop of Agen in Gaul. He wrote a book against the second Arian confession of faith that put a check to that spreading evil.

## APRIL 26

### SAINT CLETUS, POPE AND MARTYR

ST CLETUS was the third bishop of Rome and succeeded St Linus, which circumstance alone shows his eminent virtue among the first disciples of St Peter in the West. He sat twelve years, from 76 to 89. The canon of the Roman mass (which Bossuet<sup>1</sup> and all others agree to be of primitive antiquity), Bede, and other Martyrologists style him a martyr. He was buried near St Linus on the Vatican, and his relics still remain in that church.

### ST MARCELLINUS, POPE AND MARTYR

HE succeeded St Caius in the bishopric of Rome, in 296, about the time that Diocletian set himself up for a deity and impiously claimed divine honours. Theodoret says<sup>2</sup> that in those stormy times of persecution Marcellinus acquired great glory. He sat in St Peter's chair eight years, three months, and twenty-five days, dying in 304, a year after the cruel persecution broke out, in which he gained much honour. He has been styled a martyr, though his blood was not shed in the cause of religion, as appears from the Liberian Calendar, which places him among those popes that were not put to death for the faith.

It is a fundamental maxim of the Christian morality, and a truth which Christ has established in the clearest terms and in innumerable passages of the gospel,<sup>3</sup> that the cross, or sufferings and mortifications, are the road to eternal bliss. They, therefore, who lead not here a crucified and mortified life are unworthy ever to possess the unspeakable joys of his kingdom. Our Lord himself, our model and our head, walked in this path, and his great apostle puts us in mind<sup>4</sup> that he entered into bliss only by his blood and by the cross. Nevertheless, this is a truth which

<sup>1</sup> Expos. de la Messe.

<sup>2</sup> Theodoret, b. ii. c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 5, 10, xvi. 24, x. 38, xi. 12 ; Luke vi. 25, ix. 23, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. ix. 12.



the world can never understand, how clearly soever it be preached by Christ and recommended by his powerful example and that of his martyrs and of all the saints. Christians still pretend, by the joys and pleasures of this world, to attain to the bliss of heaven, and shudder at the very mention of mortification, penance, or sufferings. So prevalent is this fatal error, which self-love and the example and false maxims of the world strongly fortify in the minds of many, that those who have given themselves to God with the greatest fervour are bound always to stand upon their guard against it, and daily to renew their fervour in the love and practice of penance, and to arm themselves with patience against sufferings, lest the weight of the corruption of our nature, the pleasures of sense, and flattering blandishments of the world, draw them aside and make them leave the path of mortification, or lose courage under its labours, and under the afflictions with which God is pleased to purify them and afford them means of sanctifying themselves.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 26 :*

**SAINTS CLETUS and MARCELLINUS**, Popes, martyrs ; St Cletus was the third Bishop of Rome, a see he held from 76 to 89 ; St Marcellinus succeeded St Caius in that bishopric : **ST PASCHARIUS RADBERT**, Abbot. Having received the clerical tonsure, he returned to the world and led a secular life for some years ; but being touched by divine grace he retired to the monastery of Corbie and made his vows under St Adelhard : **ST PETER CANISIUS**, S.J., a Doctor of the Church : **ST RICHARIUS**, Abbot, born of poor parents from whom he inherited virtue. He lived as an anchorite in the Forest of Cressy and founded the monastery of Centula, which holds his relics.

APRIL 27

## ST ZITA, VIRGIN

SHE was born in the beginning of the thirteenth century at Montsegradi, a village near Lucca in Italy. She was brought up with the greatest care, in the fear of God, by her poor virtuous mother, whose early and constant attention to inspire the tender heart of her daughter with religious sentiments seemed to find no obstacles, either from private passions or the general corruption of nature, so easily were they prevented or overcome. Zita had no sooner attained the use of reason, and was capable of knowing and loving God, than her heart was no longer able to relish any other object, and she seemed never to lose sight of him in her actions. Her mother reduced all her instructions to two short heads, and never had occasion to use any further remonstrance to enforce her lessons than to say, "This is most pleasing to God; this is the divine will"; or, "That would displease God." The sweetness and modesty of the young child charmed everyone who saw her. She spoke little, and was most assiduous at her work; but her business never seemed to interrupt her prayers. At twelve years of age she was put to service in the family of a citizen of Lucca, called Fatinelli, whose house was contiguous to the church of St Frigidian. She was thoroughly persuaded that labour is enjoined all

men as a punishment of sin, and as a remedy for the spiritual disorders of their souls; and far from ever harbouring in her breast the least uneasiness, or expressing any sort of complaint under contradictions, poverty, and hardships, and still more from ever entertaining the least idle, inordinate, or worldly desire, she blessed God for placing her in a station in which she was supplied with the most effectual means to promote her sanctification, by the necessity of employing herself in penitential labour, and of living in a perpetual conformity and submission of her will to others. She was also very sensible of the advantages of her state, which afforded all necessities of life, without engaging her in the anxious cares and violent passions by which worldly persons, who enjoy most plentifully the goods of fortune, are often disturbed; whereby their souls resemble a troubled sea, always agitated by impetuous storms, without knowing the sweetness of a true calm. She considered her work as an employment assigned her by God, and as part of her penance; and obeyed her master and mistress in all things as being placed over her by God. She always rose several hours before the rest of the family and employed in prayer a considerable part of the time which others gave to sleep. She took care to hear mass every morning with great devotion before she was called upon by the duties of her station, in which she employed the whole day with such diligence and fidelity that she seemed to be carried to them on wings, and studied when possible to anticipate them. Notwithstanding her extreme attention to her exterior employments, she acquired a wonderful facility of joining with them almost continual mental prayer and of keeping her soul constantly attentive to the divine presence. Who would not imagine that such a person should have been esteemed and beloved by all who knew her? Nevertheless, by the appointment of divine providence, for her great spiritual advantage, it fell out quite otherwise and for several years she suffered the harshest trials. Her mistress was a long time extremely prepossessed against her, and her passionate master could not bear her in his sight without transports of rage. Unjustly despised, overburdened, reviled, and often beaten, she never repined nor lost her patience; but always preserved the same sweetness in her countenance, and the same meekness and charity in her heart and words, and abated nothing of her application to her duties. A virtue so constant and so admirable at length overcame jealousy, antipathy, prepossession, and malice. Her master and mistress discovered the treasure which their family possessed in the fidelity and example of the humble saint, and the other servants gave due praise to her virtue. Zita feared this prosperity more than adversity, and trembled lest it should be a snare to her soul. But sincere humility preserved her from its dangers; and her behaviour, amidst the caresses and respect shown her, continued the same as when she was ill-treated and held in derision; she was no less affable, meek,

and modest; no less devout, nor less diligent or ready to serve everyone. Being made housekeeper, and seeing her master and mistress commit to her with an entire confidence the government of their family and management of all their affairs, she was most scrupulously careful in point of economy, remembering that she was to give to God an account of the least farthing of what was intrusted as a depositum in her hands; and, though head-servant, she never allowed herself the least privilege or exemption in her work on that account. She used often to say to others that devotion is false if slothful. Hearing a man-servant speak one immodest word, she was filled with horror, and procured him to be immediately discharged from the family. With David, she desired to see it composed only of such whose approved piety might draw down a benediction of God upon the whole house and be a security to the master for their fidelity and good example. She kept fast the whole year, and often on bread and water; and took her rest on the bare floor or on a board. Whenever business allowed her a little leisure, she spent it in holy prayer and contemplation in a little retired room in the garret; and at her work repeated frequently ardent ejaculations of divine love, with which her soul appeared always inflamed. She respected her fellow-servants as her superiors. If she was sent on commissions a mile or two in the greatest storms, she set out without delay, executed them punctually, and returned often almost drowned, without showing any sign of reluctance or murmuring. By her virtue she gained so great an ascendant over her master that a single word would often suffice to check the greatest transports of his rage; and she would sometimes cast herself at his feet to appease him in favour of others. She never kept anything for herself but the poor garments which she wore: everything else she gave to the poor. Her master, seeing his goods multiply, as it were, in her hands, gave her ample leave to bestow liberal alms on the poor, which she made use of with discretion, but was scrupulous to do nothing without his express authority. If she heard others spoken ill of, she zealously took upon her their defence and excused their faults. Always when she communicated, and often when she heard mass, and on other occasions, she melted in sweet tears of divine love: she was often favoured with ecstasies during her prayers. In her last sickness she clearly foretold her death, and having prepared herself for her passage by receiving the last sacraments, and by ardent signs of love, she happily expired on the 27th of April, in 1272, being sixty years old: one hundred and fifty miracles wrought in the behalf of such as had recourse to her intercession have been juridically proved. Her body was found entire in 1580 and is kept with great respect in St Frigidian's church, richly enshrined; her face and hands are exposed naked to view through a crystal glass. Pope Leo X granted an office in her honour. The city of Lucca pays a singular veneration to her memory.

The solemn decree of her beatification was published by Innocent XII in 1696, with the confirmation of her immemorial veneration. See her life, compiled by a contemporary writer, and published by Papebroke, the Bollandist, on the 27th of April, p. 497, and Benedict XIV De Canoniz. lib. ii. c. 24, p. 245.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 27 :*

ST ANASTASIUS, Pope, called by St Jerome a man of a most rich poverty : ST ANTHIMUS, Bishop, and many other martyrs at Nicomedia : ST EGBERT, who died on Easter Day in 729 : and ST ZITA.

## APRIL 28

## ST VITALIS, MARTYR

(ABOUT THE YEAR 62)

[From Fortunatus, lib. i. carm. 2, p. 33. His acts, and the supposititious letter under the name of St Ambrose, were written only in the ninth age.]

ST VITALIS is honoured as the principal patron of the city of Ravenna, in which he glorified God by martyrdom in the persecution of Nero. He was a citizen of Milan, and is said in his acts to have been the father of SS. Gervasius and Protasius. The divine providence conducted him to Ravenna, where he saw a Christian named Ursicinus, who was condemned to lose his head for his faith, standing aghast at the sight of death and seeming to yield. Vitalis was extremely moved at this spectacle. The honour of God, which was in danger of being insulted by sin, and the soul of a brother in Christ, which appeared to be upon the very brink of apostasy, were alarming objects to awake his zeal. He who dreaded the presumption of rashly seeking the combat knew his double obligation of preferring the glory of God, and the eternal salvation of his neighbour, to his own corporeal life; he therefore boldly and successfully encouraged Ursicinus to triumph over death, and after his martyrdom carried off his body and respectfully interred it. The judge, whose name was Paulinus, being informed of what he had done, caused him to be apprehended, stretched on the rack, and after other torments, to be buried alive in a place called the Palm-tree, in Ravenna, as Fortunatus and his acts relate. These acts add that his wife Valeria, returning from Ravenna to Milan, was beaten to death by certain peasants because she refused to join them in an idolatrous festival and riot. The relics of St Vitalis are deposited in the great church which bears his name in Ravenna, and was magnificently built by the Emperor Justinian in 547.

We are not all called to the sacrifice of martyrdom; but all are bound to make their whole lives a continued sacrifice of themselves to God, and to perform every action in this perfect spirit of sacrifice. The perfection of our sacrifice depends on the purity, fervour, and constancy of this

desire. We must in particular make our bodies and our souls, with all their faculties, continual victims to God—our bodies by patient suffering, voluntary mortification, chastity, temperance, and penitential labour; our souls by a continual spirit of compunction, adoration, love, and praise. Thus we shall both live and die to God, perfectly resigned to his holy will in all his appointments.

## ST POLLIO, LECTOR, AND HIS COMPANIONS IN PANNONIA, MARTYRS

(A.D. 304)

[From his genuine acts, probably extracted from the court register, though collected under the Emperor Valentinian : extant in Ruinart.]

PROBUS, Governor of Pannonia under Diocletian in 304, having put to death St Montanus, priest of Singidon, St Irenæus, Bishop of Sirmium, and others, arrived at Cibalis, a great town between the rivers Save and Drave, afterwards the birthplace of the Emperor Valentinian; but now destroyed. The very same day on which he arrived, Pollio, the first of the readers of that church, was apprehended; a person of great virtue and a lively faith, of which he had already given signal proofs. He was presented to the governor as he was coming out of his chariot and accused as the most impious of the Christians, and one who spoke disrespectfully of the gods. Probus having asked his name, and if he were a Christian, inquired of him what office he bore. "I am," said Pollio, "the chief of the readers."

*Pro.* "Of what readers?"

*Pol.* "Why, of those who read the word of God to the people."

*Pro.* "I suppose you mean by that name a set of men who find ways and means to impose on the credulity of fickle and silly women, and persuade them to observe chastity and refrain from marriage."

*Pol.* "Those are the fickle and foolish who abandon their Creator to follow your superstitions; whilst our hearers are so steady in the profession of the truths they have imbibed from our lectures that no torments prevail with them to transgress the precepts of the eternal King."

*Pro.* "Of what king, and of what precepts, do you speak?"

*Pol.* "I mean the holy precepts of the eternal king, Jesus Christ."

*Pro.* "What do those precepts teach?"

*Pol.* "They inculcate the belief and adoration of one only God, who causeth thunder in the heavens, and they teach that what is made of wood or stone deserves not to be called God. They correct sinners, animate and strengthen the good in virtue; teach virgins to attain to the perfection of their state, and the married to live up to the rules of conjugal chastity; they teach masters to command with mildness and moderation, slaves to

submit with love and affection, subjects to obey all in power in all things that are just; in a word, they teach us to honour parents, requite our friends, forgive our enemies, exercise hospitality to strangers, assist the poor, to be just, kind, and charitable to all men; to believe a happy immortality prepared for those who despise the momentary death which you have power to inflict."

*Pro.* "Of what felicity is a man capable after death?"

*Pol.* "There is no comparison between the happiness of this and the next life. The fleeting comforts of this mortal state deserve not the name of goods when compared with the permanent joys of eternity."

*Pro.* "This is foreign to our purpose; let us come to the point of the edict."

*Pol.* "What is the purport of it?"

*Pro.* "That you must sacrifice to the gods."

*Pol.* "Sacrifice I will not, let what will be the consequence; for it is written: He that shall sacrifice to devils, and not to God, shall be exterminated."

*Pro.* "Then you must resolve to die."

*Pol.* "My resolution is fixed: do what you are commanded."

Probus thereupon condemned him to be burnt alive; and the sentence was immediately executed at the distance of a mile from the town. Thus the acts. He suffered on the 27th of April, in 304, the same day on which, according to the acts of Pollio, St Eusebius, bishop of the same city, had suffered several years before, perhaps under Valerian.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 28 :*

ST CRONAN, Abbot of Roscrea, in Ireland, where his relics are treasured: SAINTS DIDYMUS and THEODORA, martyrs: BLESSED LOUIS MARIE GRIGNON DE MONTFORT, Confessor: ST PATRICIUS, Bishop of Prusa, in Bithynia, martyr: ST POLLIO, lector, and his heroic companions, martyrs in Pannonia: ST PAUL OF THE CROSS, Founder of the Passionist Congregation, 1694-1775: ST VITALIS, martyred about the year 62.

APRIL 29

ST PETER, MARTYR

(A.D. 1252)

[From his life, by Thomas of Leontino, a Dominican friar, who had resided long with him at Verona, and was afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem, &c., collected by Touron in his life of St Dominic, p. 480. See also the remarks of Papebroke, t. iii. Apr. p. 679.]

ST PETER the martyr was born at Verona, in 1205, of parents infected with the heresy of the Cathari, a sort of Manichees, who had insensibly made their way into the northern parts of Italy during the quarrel between the emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, and the holy see.<sup>1</sup> God preserved him

<sup>1</sup> The Ven. F. Moneta, the beloved disciple of St Dominic in Italy, wrote, about the year 1730, five books *adversus Catharos et Waldenses*, which F. Ricchini published at Rome in 1743. From this work, and the editor's preliminary dissertations and notes, we learn many curious articles relating to the errors and history of these heretics.

from the danger which attended his birth of being infected with heretical sentiments. His father being desirous of giving him an early tincture of learning, sent him, while very young, to a Catholic schoolmaster; not questioning but by his own instruction afterwards, and by the child's conversing with his heretical relations, he should be able to efface whatever impressions he might receive at school to the contrary. One of the first things he learned there was the apostles' creed, which the Manichees held in abhorrence. His uncle one day, out of curiosity, asked him his lesson. The boy recited to him the creed and explained it in the catholic sense, especially in those words: Creator of heaven and earth. In vain did his uncle long endeavour to persuade him it was false, and that it was not God but the evil principle that made all things that are visible; pretending many things in the world to be ugly and bad, which he thought inconsistent with the idea we ought to entertain of an infinitely perfect being. The resolute steadiness which the boy showed on the occasion his uncle looked upon as a bad omen for their sect; but the father laughed at his fears and sent Peter to the University of Bologna, in which city there then reigned a licentious corruption of manners among the youth. To fly sin more effectually, he addressed himself to St Dominic and, though but fifteen years of age, received at his hands the habit of his Order. But he soon lost that holy director, whom God called to glory. Peter continued with no less fervour to square his life by the maxims and spirit of his holy founder, and to practise his rule with the most scrupulous exactness and fidelity. He went beyond it even in those times of its primitive fervour. He was assiduous in prayer; his watchings and fasts were such that even in his novitiate they considerably impaired his health; but a mitigation in them restored it before he made his solemn vows. When by them he had happily deprived himself of his liberty, to make the more perfect sacrifice of his life to God, he drew upon him the eyes of all his brethren by his profound humility, incessant prayer, exact silence, and general mortification of his senses and inclinations. Every hour of the day had its employment allotted to it; he being always either studying, reading, praying, serving the sick, or occupying himself in the most mean and abject offices, such as sweeping the house, &c., which, to entertain himself in sentiments of humility, he undertook with wonderful alacrity and satisfaction, even when he was senior in religion. But prayer was, as it were, the seasoning both of his sacred studies (in which he made great progress) and of all his other actions. Gratitude to his Redeemer for the graces he had received, a holy zeal for his honour, and a tender compassion for sinners, moved him to apply himself with great zeal and diligence to procure the conversion of souls to God. This was the subject of his daily tears and prayers; and for this end, after he was promoted to the holy order of priesthood, he entirely devoted himself to the function

of preaching, for which his superiors found him excellently qualified by the gifts both of nature and grace. He converted an incredible number of heretics and sinners in the Romagna, the marquisate of Ancona, Tuscany, the Bolognese, and the Milanese. And it was by many tribulations which befell him during the course of his ministry that God prepared him for the crown of martyrdom. He was accused by some of his own brethren of admitting strangers, and even women, into his cell. He did not own the calumny, because this would have been a lie, but he defended himself, without positively denying it, and with trembling in such a manner as to be believed guilty, not of anything criminal, but of a breach of his rule; and his superiors imposed on him a claustral punishment, banished him to the remote little Dominican convent of Jesi, in the marquisate of Ancona, and removed him from the office of preaching. Peter received this humiliation with great interior joy, on seeing himself suffer something in imitation of Him who, being infinite sanctity, bore with patience and silence the most grievous slanders, afflictions, and torments for our sake. But after some months his innocence was cleared, and he was commanded to return and resume his former functions with honour. He appeared everywhere in the pulpits with greater zeal and success than ever, and his humility drew on his labours an increase of graces and benedictions. He was made superior of several houses of his Order, and in the year 1232 was constituted by the pope inquisitor general of the faith. He had ever been the terror of the new Manichee heretics, a sect whose principles and practice tended to the destruction of civil society and Christian morals. Now they saw him invested with this dignity, they conceived a greater hatred than ever against him. They bore it, however, under the popedom of Gregory IX, but seeing him continued in his office and discharging it with still greater zeal under Pope Innocent IV, they conspired his death, and hired two assassins to murder him on his return from Como to Milan. The ruffians lay in ambush for him on his road, and one of them, Carinus by name, gave him two cuts on the head with an axe, and then stabbed his companion, called Dominic. Seeing Peter rise on his knees and hearing him recommend himself to God by those words: "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my soul," and recite the creed, he despatched him by a wound in the side with his cuttle-axe, on the 6th of April in 1252, the saint being forty-six years and some days old. His body was pompously buried in the Dominicans' church dedicated to St Eustorgius, in Milan, where it still rests; his head is kept apart in a case of crystal and gold. The heretics were confounded at his heroic death and at the wonderful miracles God wrought at his shrine; and in great numbers desired to be admitted into the bosom of the Catholic Church. Carinus, the murderer of the martyr, fled out of the territory of Milan to the city of Forli, where, being struck with remorse, he renounced his heresy, put on the habit of



a lay-brother among the Dominicans, and persevered in penance to the edification of many. St Peter was canonized the year after his death by Innocent IV, who appointed his festival to be kept on the 29th of April. The history of miracles, performed by his relics and intercessions, fills twenty-two pages in folio in the *Acta Sanctorum*, by the Bollandists, Apr. t. iii. p. 697 to 719.

Our divine Redeemer was pleased to represent himself to us, both for a model to all who should exercise the pastoral charge in his church and for the encouragement of sinners, under the figure of the good shepherd, who, having sought and found his lost sheep, with joy carried it back to the fold on his shoulders. The primitive Christians were so delighted with this emblem of his tender love and mercy that they engraved the figure of the good shepherd, loaded with the lost sheep on his shoulders, on the sacred chalices which they used for the holy mysteries or at mass, as we learn from Tertullian. The aumusses, or furs, which most canons, both secular and regular, wear are a remnant of the skins or furs worn by many primitive pastors for their garments. They wore them not only as badges of a penitential life, in imitation of those saints in the Old Law who wandered about in poverty, clad with skins, as St Paul describes them, and of St Anthony and many other primitive Christian anchorites, but chiefly to put them in mind of their obligation of imitating the great pastor of souls in seeking the lost sheep and carrying it back on his shoulders; also of putting on his meekness, humility, and obedience, represented under his adorable title of Lamb of God, and that of sheep devoted to be immolated by death.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 29 :*

ST FIACHNA, a monk of Lismore and a disciple of St Carthagh who, by the spirit of obedience, laid the foundation of a life of prayer and of all virtues : ST HUGH, Abbot of Cluny, who succeeded to the government of that great monastery when only twenty-five and held it for sixty-two years : ST PETER, martyr, 1252 : ST ROBERT, Abbot of Molesme, founder of the Cistercians, died 1109.

APRIL 30

## ST CATHARINE OF SIENNA, VIRGIN

(A.D. 1380)

[From her life by Raymund of Capua, her confessor, afterwards general of the Dominicans; also by Stephen, prior of the Carthusians, near Pavia, who had intimately known the saint, and from other contemporary authors. Likewise Dives Catherinæ Senensis Vita per Joan. Pinum, Tolosanum. Bononiæ, 4to, 1505. See her history, judiciously and elegantly compiled by F. Touron, t. ii., a writer justly extolled in the *Journal de Sçavants*, and honoured with great encomiums by Pope Benedict XIV. Her life by her confessor, containing things omitted in other editions, is printed in Italian at Florence, in 1477, 4to, in a Gothic character; yet this is a translation from the Latin; also another printed at Sienna in 1524, 4to. See also Papebroke's Remarks, Apr. t. iii. p. 851.]

ST CATHARINE was born at Sienna in 1347. Her father, James Benincasa, by trade a dyer, was a virtuous man, and though blessed with temporal

prosperity, always chiefly solicitous to leave to his children a solid inheritance of virtue, by his example, and by deeply instilling into them lessons of piety. Her mother Lapa had a particular affection for this daughter above her other children; and the accomplishments of mind and body with which she was adorned made her the darling and delight of all that knew her and procured her the name of Euphrosyna. She was favoured by God with extraordinary graces as soon as she was capable of knowing him. She withdrew very young to a solitude a little way out of the town to imitate the lives of the fathers of the desert. Returning after some time to her father's house, she continued to be guided by the same spirit. In her childhood she consecrated her virginity to God by a private vow. Her love of mortification and prayer, and her sentiments of virtue, were such as are not usually found in so tender an age. But God was pleased to put her resolution to a great trial. At twelve years of age her parents thought of engaging her in a married state. Catharine found them deaf to her entreaties that she might live single; and therefore redoubled her prayers, watching, and austerities, knowing her protection must be from God alone. Her parents regarding her inclination to solitude as unsuitable to the life for which they designed her, endeavoured to divert her from it, and began to thwart her devotions, depriving her in this view of the little chamber or cell they had till then allowed her. They loaded her with the most distracting employments and laid on her the drudgery of all the house, as if she had been a person hired into the family for that purpose. The hardest labour, humiliations, contempt, and the insults of her sisters were to the saint a subject of joy; and such was her ardent love of crosses that she embraced them in all shapes with a holy eagerness and received all railleries with an admirable sweetness and heroic patience. If anything grieved her, it was the loss of her dear solitude. But the Holy Ghost, that interior faithful master to whom she listened, taught her to make herself another solitude in her heart. In that admirable Treatise of God's Providence which she writ, she saith, "That our Lord had taught her to build in her soul a private closet, strongly vaulted with the divine providence, and to keep herself always close and retired there; he assured her that by this means she should find peace and perpetual repose in her soul, which no storm or tribulation could disturb or interrupt." Her sisters and other friends persuaded her to join with them in the diversions of the world, alleging that virtue is not an enemy to neatness in dress or to cheerfulness; under which soft names they endeavoured to recommend the dangerous liberties of worldly pastimes and vanities. Catharine was accordingly prevailed upon by her sister to dress in a manner something more genteel; but she soon repented of her compliance, and wept for it during the remainder of her life as the greatest infidelity she had ever been guilty of to her heavenly spouse. The death

of her eldest sister Bonaventura soon after confirmed her in those sentiments. Her father, edified at her patience and virtue, at length approved and seconded her devotion and all her pious desires. She liberally assisted the poor, served the sick, and comforted the afflicted and prisoners. Her chief subsistence was on boiled herbs, without either sauce or bread, which last she seldom tasted. She wore a very rough hair-cloth and a large iron girdle armed with sharp points, lay on the ground, and watched much. Humility, obedience, and a denial of her own will, even in her penitential austerities, gave them their true value. She began this course of life when under fifteen years of age. She was, moreover, visited with many painful distempers, which she underwent with incredible patience; she had also suffered much from the use of hot baths, prescribed her by physicians. Amidst her pains it was her constant prayer that they might serve for the expiation of her offences and the purifying her heart. She long desired, and in 1365, the eighteenth year of her age (but two years later, according to some writers), she received the habit of the third Order of St Dominic in a nunnery contiguous to the Dominicans' convent. From that time her cell became her paradise, prayer her element, and her mortifications had no longer any restraint. For three years she never spoke to anyone but to God and her confessor. Her days and nights were employed in the delightful exercises of contemplation; the fruits whereof were supernatural lights, a most ardent love of God, and zeal for the conversion of sinners. The old serpent, seeing her angelical life, set all his engines at work to assault her virtue. He first filled her imagination with the most filthy representations and assailed her heart with the basest and most humbling temptations. Afterwards he spread in her soul such a cloud and darkness that it was the severest trial imaginable. She saw herself a hundred times on the brink of the precipice, but was always supported by an invisible hand. Her arms were fervent prayer, humility, resignation, and confidence in God. By these she persevered victorious and was at last delivered from those trials which had only served to purify her heart. Our Saviour visiting her after this bitter conflict, she said to him, "Where wast thou, my divine Spouse, whilst I lay in such an abandoned, frightful condition?" "I was with thee," he seemed to reply. "What!" said she, "amidst the filthy abominations with which my soul was infested!" He answered, "They were displeasing and most painful to thee. This conflict, therefore, was thy merit, and the victory over them was owing to my presence." Her ghostly enemy also solicited her to pride, omitting neither violence nor stratagem to seduce her into this vice; but invincible humility was a buckler to cover her from all his fiery darts. God recompensed her charity to the poor by many miracles, often multiplying provisions in her hands and enabling her to carry loads of corn, oil, and other necessities to the poor which her

natural strength could not otherwise have borne. The greatest miracle seemed her patience in bearing the murmurs and even the reproaches of these ungrateful and importunate people. Catharine dressed and served an old woman named Tocca, infected to that degree with a leprosy that the magistrates had ordered her to be removed out of the city and separated from all others. This poor wretch nevertheless made no other return to the tender charity of the saint but continual bitter complaints and reproaches; which, instead of wearying out her constancy, only moved the saint to show her still greater marks of sweetness and humility. Another, whose infectious cancer the saint for a long time sucked and dressed, published against her the most infamous calumnies, in which she was seconded by a sister of the convent. Catharine bore in silence the violent persecution they brought upon her and continued her affectionate services till, by her patience and prayers, she had obtained of God the conversion of both these enemies, which was followed by a retraction of their slanders.

The ardent charity of this holy virgin made her indefatigable in labouring for the conversion of sinners, offering for that end continual tears, prayers, fasts, and other austerities, and thinking nothing difficult or above her strength. All her discourses, actions, and her very silence powerfully induced men to the love of virtue, so that no one, according to Pope Pius II, ever approached her who went not away better. Nannes, a powerful turbulent citizen, being brought to our saint to be reclaimed, all she could say to him to bring him to a right sense of his duty was of no effect; upon which she made a sudden pause in her discourse, to offer up her prayers for him: they were heard that very instant, and an entire change was wrought in the man, to which his tears and other tokens bore evidence. He accordingly reconciled himself to all his enemies and embraced a most penitential life. When he afterwards fell into many temporal calamities, the saint rejoiced at his spiritual advantage under them, saying, God purged his heart from the poison with which it was infected by its inveterate attachment to creatures. Nannes gave to the saint a stately house which he possessed within two miles of the city. This, by the pope's authority, she converted into a nunnery. We omit the miraculous conversion of James Tholomei and his sisters, of Nicholas Tuldo, and many others; particularly of two famous assassins going to die with blasphemies in their mouths and in transports of rage and despair, who were suddenly converted in their last moments, on the saint's praying for them, confessed their crimes to a priest with great signs of repentance, and appeared thoroughly resigned to the punishment about to be inflicted on them. A pestilence laying waste the country in 1374, Catharine devoted herself to serve the infected and obtained of God the cure of several; amongst others, of two holy Dominicans, Raymund of Capua and Bartholomew of Sienna. The most hardened sinners could not withstand

the force of her exhortations to a change of life. Thousands flocked from places at a distance in the country to hear or only to see her, and were brought over by her words or example to the true dispositions of sincere repentance. She undertook a journey to Monte Pulciano to consecrate to God two of her nieces, who there took the religious veil of St Dominic; and another journey to Pisa, by order of her superiors, at the earnest suit of the citizens. She there restored health to many in body, but to a far greater number in soul. Raymund of Capua and two other Dominicans were commissioned by Pope Gregory XI, then residing at Avignon, to hear the confessions, at Sienna, of those who were induced by the saint to enter upon a change of life; these priests were occupied, day and night, in hearing the confessions of many who had never confessed before; besides those of others who had acquitted themselves but superficially of that duty. Whilst she was at Pisa, in 1375, the people of Florence and Perugia, with a great part of Tuscany and even of the Ecclesiastical State, entered into a league against the holy see. The news of this disturbance was delivered to Catharine by Raymund of Capua, and her heart was pierced with the most bitter sorrow on account of those evils which she had foretold three years before they came to their height. The two furious factions of the Guelphs and Gibellines, which had so disturbed and divided the state of Florence, then a powerful commonwealth, united at last against the pope to strip the holy see of the lands it possessed in Italy. The disturbance was begun in June 1373, and a numerous army was set on foot: the word "Libertas," wrote on the banner of the league, was the signal. Perugia, Bologna, Viterbo, Ancona, and other strongholds soon declared for them. The inhabitants of Arezzo, Lucca, Sienna, and other places were kept within the bounds of duty by the prayers, letters, and exhortations of St Catharine and generously contemned the threats of the Florentines. Pope Gregory XI, residing at Avignon, wrote to the city of Florence, but without success. He therefore sent the cardinal Robert of Geneva, his legate, with an army and laid the diocese of Florence under an interdict. Internal divisions, murders, and all other domestic miseries amongst the Florentines, joined with the conspiracy of the neighbouring states, concurred to open their eyes and make them sue for pardon. The magistrates sent to Sienna to beg St Catharine would become their mediatrix. She could not resist their pressing entreaties. Before she arrived at Florence, she was met by the priors or chiefs of the magistrates; and the city left the management of the whole affair to her discretion, with a promise that she should be followed to Avignon by their ambassadors, who should sign and ratify the conditions of reconciliation between the parties at variance and confirm everything she had done. The saint arrived at Avignon on the 18th of June 1376, and was received by the pope and cardinals with great marks of distinction. His holiness, after a conference with her, in

admiration of her prudence and sanctity, said to her, "I desire nothing but peace. I put the affairs entirely into your hands; only I recommend to you the honour of the church." But the Florentines sought not peace sincerely, and they continued to carry on secret intrigues to draw all Italy from its obedience to the holy see.

The saint had another point no less at heart in her journey to Avignon. Pope John XXII, a Frenchman, born at Cahors, bishop, first of Frejus, then of Avignon, lastly of Porto, being made pope in 1314, fixed his residence at Avignon, where John's successors, Benedict XII, Clement VI, Innocent VI, and Urban V also resided. The then Pope Gregory XI, elected in 1370, continued also there. The Romans complained that their bishop had for seventy-four years past forsaken their church, and threatened a schism. Gregory XI had made a secret vow to return to Rome; but not finding this design agreeable to his court, he consulted the holy virgin on this subject, who answered, "Fulfil what you have promised to God." The pope, surprised she should know by revelation what he had never discovered to any person on earth, was immediately determined to carry his good design into execution. The saint soon after left Avignon. We have several letters wrote by her to him, to press him to hasten his return; and he shortly after followed her, leaving Avignon on the 13th of September in 1376. He overtook the saint at Genoa, where she made a short stay. At Sienna she continued her former way of life, serving and often curing the sick, converting the most obstinate sinners and reconciling the most inveterate enemies, more still by her prayers than by her words. Such was her knowledge of heavenly things that certain Italian doctors, out of envy, and with the intent to expose her ignorance, being come to hold a conference with her, departed in confusion and admiration at her interior lights. The same had happened at Avignon some time before, where three prelates, envying her credit with the pope, put to her the most intricate questions on an interior life and many other subjects; but, admiring her answers to all their difficulties, confessed to the pope they had never seen a soul so enlightened and so profoundly humble as Catharine. She had many disciples: amongst others Stephen, son of Conrad, a senator of Sienna. This nobleman was reduced by enemies to the last extremity. Seeing himself on the brink of ruin, he addressed himself to the saint, who, having first made a thorough convert of him from the world and its vanities, by her prayers miraculously, on a sudden, pacified all his persecutors and calmed their fury. Stephen, from that time, looked upon as dust all that he had formerly most passionately loved and pursued. He became the most fervent amongst her disciples, made a collection of all her words as oracles, would be her secretary to write her letters, and her companion in her journeys to Avignon, Florence, and Rome; and at length, by her advice, professed himself a Carthusian monk. He assisted at her death,

and wrote her life at the request of several princes; having been witness of her great miracles and virtues and her extraordinary light in spiritual things.

St Catharine wrote to Pope Gregory XI at Rome, strongly urging him to contribute by all means possible to the general peace of Italy. His holiness commissioned her to go to Florence, still divided and obstinate in its disobedience. She lived some time in that factious place in frequent dangers of her own life; in which she always showed herself most undaunted, even when swords were drawn against her. At length she overcame that obstinate people and brought them to submission, obedience, and peace, though not under Gregory XI, as Baillet mistakes, but his successor Urban VI, as her contemporary historian informs us. This memorable reconciliation was effected in 1378; after which Catharine hastened to her solitary abode at Sienna, where her occupation and, we may say, her very nourishment, was holy prayer; in which intercourse with the Almighty he discovered to her very wonderful mysteries. Some of her discourses were collected and compose the treatise *On Providence*, under her name. Her whole life seemed one continued miracle; but what the servants of God admired most in her was the perpetual strict union of her soul with God. For many years she had accustomed herself to so rigorous an abstinence that the blessed eucharist might be said to be almost the only nourishment which supported her. Once she fasted from Ash-Wednesday till Ascension-day, receiving only the blessed eucharist during that whole time. Many treated her as a hypocrite and invented all manner of calumnies against her; but she rejoiced at humiliations and gloried in the cross of Christ as much as she dreaded and abhorred praise and applause. In a vision our Saviour is said one day to have presented her with two crowns, one of gold and the other of thorns, bidding her choose which of the two she pleased. She answered, "I desire, O Lord, to live here always conformed to your passion, and to find pain and suffering my repose and delight." Then eagerly taking up the crown of thorns, she forcibly pressed it upon her head. What above all things pierced her heart was scandal, chiefly that of the unhappy great schism which followed the death of Gregory XI, in 1378, when Urban VI was chosen at Rome and acknowledged there by all the cardinals, though his election was in the beginning overruled by the Roman people, who demanded an Italian pope. Urban's harsh and austere temper alienated from him the affections of the cardinals, several of whom withdrew: and having declared the late election null, chose Clement VII, with whom they retired out of Italy and resided at Avignon. Our saint, not content to spend herself in floods of tears, weeping before God for these evils of his church, wrote the strongest and most pathetic letters to those cardinals who had first acknowledged Urban and afterwards elected another; pressing them to return to their lawful pastor and acknowledge Urban's

title. She wrote also to several countries and princes-in his favour and to Urban himself, exhorting him to bear up cheerfully under the troubles he found himself involved in, and to abate somewhat of a temper that had made him so many enemies, and mollify that rigidity of disposition which had driven the world from him and still kept a very considerable part of Christendom from acknowledging him. The pope listened to her, sent for her to Rome, followed her directions, and designed to send her, with St Catharine of Sweden, to Joan, Queen of Sicily, who had sided with Clement. She wrote to Queen Joan; likewise two letters full of holy fire to the King of France, also to the King of Hungary and others, to exhort them to renounce the schism.

We pass over the ecstasies and other wonderful favours this virgin received from heaven, and the innumerable miracles God wrought by her means. She has left us, besides the example of her life, six Treatises in form of a dialogue, a Discourse on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and three hundred and sixty-four Letters, which show that she had a superior genius and wrote perfectly well. Whilst she was labouring to extend the obedience of the true pope, Urban VI, her infirmities and pains increasing, she died at Rome on the 29th of April in 1380, being thirty-three years old. She was buried in the church of the Minerva, where her body is still kept under an altar. Her skull is in the Dominicans' church at Sienna, in which city are shown her house, her instruments of penance, and other relics. She was canonized by Pope Pius II in 1461. Urban VIII transferred her festival to the 30th of this month.

When we read the lives of the saints and consider the wonderful graces with which God enriched them, we admire their happiness in being so highly favoured by him, and say to ourselves that their labours and sufferings bore no proportion to the sweetness of heavenly peace and love with which their souls were replenished. But it was in the victory over their passions, in the fervour of their charity, and in the perfection of their humility, patience, and meekness that their virtue and their happiness chiefly consisted. Nor are we to imagine that God raised them to these sublime graces without their assiduous application to the practice both of exterior and interior mortification, especially of the latter. Self-denial prepared them for this state of perfect virtue, and supported them in it.

*The following feasts are celebrated on April 30 :*

ST AJUTRE or Adjuntr, recluse at Vernon, in Normandy : ST CATHARINE OF SIENNA : ST ERCONWALD, Bishop of London, consecrated to that see by Theodorus after being drawn from his beloved solitude. He founded the monastery at Barking, in Essex. SAINTS JAMES, MARIAN, and their companions, martyrs in Numidia, 259. Mary, mother of the Blessed Marian, followed her son, like the mother of the Maccabees, to the place of execution to encourage him. Seeing he was dead, she blessed God for having made her the mother of such a son : BD. JOSEPH COTTOLENGO, 1786-1842 : ST MAXIMUS, martyr, a merchant in Asia who, firmly declaring himself a Christian, under Decius, was stoned to death, "to serve as an example to all Christians" : and ST SOPHIA, virgin, martyr, who suffered for the faith in the third age at Firmo, in Italy.